



# **The Impact of Title Sponsorship on Customer-Based Brand Equity: An Evaluation of Seasonal Soccer Tournaments in South Africa**

by

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ABSA	Amalgamated Banks of South Africa
CBBE	Customer-Based Brand Equity
CMO	Chief Marketing Officer
HoD	Head of Division
IEG	International Events Group
MTN	Mobile Telephone Network
PSL	Premier Soccer League
SA	South Africa
SAB	South African Breweries

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, sponsorship marketing has been a major contributor to the popularity of South African sports, particularly football (Blake, Fourie, & Goldman, 2018). From 1996 to 2010, the South African sponsorship market experienced exponential growth, with brands paying large sums of money to leverage sponsorship rights and properties (Africa, 2015). At the end of the 2015/16 Premier Soccer League (PSL) season, South Africa's highest professional football division reported a sponsorship income of over R300 million (PSL, 2018). Leading up to the 2010 World Cup, the PSL was ranked seventh on the list of leagues with the biggest sponsorship revenues (Africa, 2015). At a global scale, the International Events Group (IEG) estimated the global sports sponsorship market to be worth well over \$60 billion in 2017 (IEG, 2017).

Sponsorship marketing grew increasingly popular in the late 1980s when a significant shift was introduced in marketing (Schmitt, 2011). The shift was an effort by firms to differentiate themselves in the marketplace by moving away from the common ratification of products' aspects and functional benefits towards brands' symbolic overtones (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Associating with sports properties allowed firms to illuminate their purpose and position, and get closer to consumers (Yousaf, Mishra, & Gupta, 2018). Sponsorship also allows firms to access exploitable commercial potential associated with the sponsored property (Yousaf *et al.*, 2018).

As sponsorship became popular, firms started devising alternate approaches to utilise sponsorship budgets to remain differentiated in the marketplace (Kudo, 2010). Some firms went into commercial sponsorship whilst others opted for philanthropy (Kudo, 2010). Those who opted for commercial sports sponsorship could leverage events, teams, or individual athletes for affiliation (Zinger & O'Reilly, 2010). Over time, firms have become critical of sponsorships and the value they bring given their cost (Clark, Cornwell, & Pruitt, 2009). The criticism comes as there are no deliberate nor quantifiable derived benefits (Farsky, Sattler, & Schnittka, 2013). As a result, firms focus more on short-term tournaments instead of long-term sponsorship commitments

(Clark *et al.*, 2009). Short-term tournaments have generally been used as tactical selling assets (Zinger & O'Reilly, 2010). In South Africa, known firms like South African Breweries (SAB), Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) and Telkom opted for tournaments in place of season-long sponsorship. This behaviour mimics that of sponsors in other countries which depicts the pressure on sponsors to deliver results (Farsky *et al.*, 2013).

The aforementioned firms sponsor short-term tournaments where a series of games are played over a predefined period of time for an overall prize (Byl, 2014). The tournaments are characterised by criteria for participation, advancement and elimination, and overall winner (Byl, 2014). Tournaments are different from a regular season because they are played over a predefined short period, parallel to the regular season or during the pre-season (Lanclos, 2017). In short-term tournaments, sponsors have the opportunity to reinvent their strategies and financial commitments over a short period (Salo, 2011). Lanclos (2017) states that short-term tournaments are more viable financially than season-long sponsorship as sponsors can reinvent and reassess their commitment as tournaments have shorter duration.

The continued growth of short-term tournament sports is attributable to several factors, but importantly, it is to get the consumer excited and remain engaged for the duration of the tournament (Red Bull, 2017). Short-term tournaments are beneficial for fans as they give instant gratification where their team could be crowned champions without waiting for the league to conclude (Byl, 2014). Tournaments are also beneficial for competing participants as they provide instant prizes (Byl, 2014). Short-term tournaments are an instrument for firms to elicit excitement for fans but also to deliver impact on sponsor firms (Schmitt, 2011). Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello (2009) argue that to build this excitement, sponsor firms need to deploy exciting experiences to boost the effectiveness of the tournaments. The experiences are essential in delivering impact on firms as they likely alter how consumers perceive a brand (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Keller, 2013).

Brand experiences are about creating and staging interactive, memorable activities for consumers (Schmitt, 2010). The experiences are characterised by involvement and contact between the brand and consumers during the sponsored tournament (Schmitt,

2011). Brand experiences have potential to alter how consumers perceive a brand in terms of identity, meaning, responses and relationships (Donlan & Crowther, 2013). These four tenets combined equate to customer-based brand equity (Keller, 2013). Chieng & Goi (2011) define (CBBE) as the differential brand knowledge that resides in the mind of consumers pertaining to a brand.

The introduction of brand experiences in sponsorship marketing, particularly short-term tournaments, has not averted the criticism that arose in the 1990s regarding the effectiveness of sponsorship marketing (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Organisations remain uncertain on the value they derive from sponsorships (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Beyond the assumed financial gains, firms are not certain if sponsorship changes what people see, hear, feel, and think towards the sponsor brand (Lanclos, 2017). The following section provides an overview of the existing literature and information that details the relationship identified above.

## 1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This section provides background to this study, drawing on existing literature as evidence to the variables under study. As sport sponsorship continues to grow, there is increased pressure on sponsor firms to produce tangible results for businesses (Donlan, 2013). As a result, sponsors have turned to title sponsorship of short-term tournaments to be differentiated in a cluttered sponsorship market and to also deliver impact for businesses by providing experiences for consumers (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014).

### 1.2.1. Sports Commercial Sponsorship

Commercial sports sponsorship refers to the sponsorship of a sports property with the intent of deriving commercial benefits (Pulizzi, 2013). Sport sponsorship is a two-way commercial relationship between a sponsor and a sponsored property (Renard & Sitz, 2011). In this relationship, the sponsor provides resources; cash or in kind, to a sponsored property and in return obtains rights to leverage the property for commercial purposes (Donlan, 2013). Donlan & Crowther (2014) add that sponsorship is the provision of resources by a firm to a sponsored property, enabling the latter to pursue activities with the agreement of contemplated benefits for the sponsor in terms of the sponsor's marketing strategy. Renard & Sitz (2011) argue that for the resources

provided, sponsors can leverage the sponsored property in terms of their media objectives, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotions, publicity and personal selling. Importantly, these activities are done to get closer to the consumer, to create interactions that are memorable, allowing consumers to experience brands beyond its products and services (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014).

Sponsorship is a widely discussed subject area with many complex facets of interest, but for the purposes of this study, the focus is on sport commercial sponsorship with specific interest on soccer. This is because soccer as a device and a passion point, has enormous support, thus serves as a connecting mechanism between sponsor brands and consumers (Pulizzi, 2013; Donlan, 2013). Commercial sponsorship is used explicitly as a marketing tool, with explicit commercial targets and return-on-investment objectives (Lee, 2015). Schmitt (2011) highlights the advantages of sponsorship briefly discussed below, but which will be elaborated in the literature review chapter.

#### *1.2.1.1. Impact on Awareness*

Sports sponsorship has long been used to create and sustain brand awareness for sponsor firms (Crompton, 2015). Keller (2009) describes awareness as the ability of a consumer to recognise a firm through its associated collateral under different conditions. Brands enjoy high levels of awareness when consumers can easily identify the brand without overt visual assistance (Keller, 2009). Crompton (2015) states that sponsorship can impact spontaneous awareness and cement top-of-mind awareness (Cornwell, 2011).

#### *1.2.1.2. Impact of image*

The second benefit of sponsorship is the impact it has on brand image (Ozgoli, 2017). Image is defined as the linkage of a brand to an attribute in the consumer's mind (Keller, 2013). Image is important for brands because it impacts how a consumer perceives a brand (Salo, 2011). Firms that sponsor sports are usually associated with attributes as youthful, fun, energetic etcetera (Salo, 2011). A strong brand image can lead to a purchase intent (Salo, 2011).



#### 1.2.1.3. *Purchase Intent*

Purchase intent is the second most desired response expected of consumers (Meenaghan, 2013). Purchase intent means a consumer has put the sponsor firm in their consideration set which may result in an actual sale (Koronios, Psiloutsikou, Kriemadis, Zervoulakos, & Leivaditi, 2016). Literature states that consumers who believe that a firm is involved in sponsorship will likely purchase the firm's products, which leads to an actual sale conversion (Koronios *et al.*, 2016).

#### 1.2.1.4. *Impact on Sales*

An actual sale conversion is the most desired response yet the most understated objective in sponsorship (Salo, 2011). The product adoption process outlined by Crompton (2015) states that potential customers move from awareness, to interest, to intent to purchase and an actual sale. Sponsorship plays a significant role in each of the segments identified above (Crompton, 2015). Beyond sales, firms are also looking to build relationships with consumers (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2014).

#### 1.2.1.5. *Relationship Marketing*

Sponsorship can also be utilised to elicit and create relationships with consumers (Mullin *et al.*, 2014). By providing memorable interactions through sponsorship, firms can forge relationships with new clients whilst retaining old clients (Schmitt, 2010). If a brand is differentiated in its experiences and engagements, sponsorship can help to build long-lasting relations (Mullin *et al.*, 2014). Shank (2009) adds that sponsorship can be a crucial component in bringing firms closer to consumers and eliciting desired responses. Through sponsorship, firms can increase their awareness, build or maintain their image and even impact sales (Meenaghan, 2013).

The above identified sponsorship benefits are generic to all sponsors that pursue sport sponsorship (Salo, 2011). There are also perceived benefits associated with title sponsorship and the sponsorship of short-term tournaments. The section below provides a brief context on the decision by brands to pursue title sponsorship of tournaments.

### 1.2.2. Title Sponsorship of Short-term Tournaments

As sponsorships grew exponentially in the 1990s, firms started diversifying especially in their sponsorship approaches (Salo, 2011). This was mainly because too many firms were in the market looking for properties to sponsor within the regular leagues (Byl, 2014). As a result, firms started sponsoring short-term tournaments as title sponsors (Clark *et al.*, 2009). According to Clark *et al.* (2009), not much scholarly attention has been paid to title sponsorship. It is stated that title sponsorship is differentiated by name sharing with the sponsored property (Clark *et al.*, 2009). Roy & Cornwell (1999) identified six objectives of title sponsorship namely: image enhancement, exclusive communications, awareness, brand positioning, part of an integrated marketing communications plan, and direct on-site sales (Roy & Cornwell, 1999). The benefits outlined are still relevant as there is no recent academic evidence to dispute their submission (Roy & Cornwell, 1999).

Similarly, to the lack of scientific evidence in title sponsorship, short-term tournaments have also not received considerable attention (Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). Research states that the main motivation for choosing short-term tournaments is because they are adaptable (Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). Short-term tournaments sponsors need to reinvent and intensify their sponsorship experiences to keep consumers interested and engaged (Schmitt, 2010). Experiences play an important role in sponsorships.

### 1.2.3. Brand Experiences in Sponsorship

Brand experiences as marketing tactics, are used to engage consumers for the purposes of bringing consumers close to the brand (Fransen, Rompay, & Muntinga, 2011). Brand experiences are about initiating and staging memorable activities for the consumer (Fransen *et al.*, 2011). Experiences that are highly involving in nature are likely to impact how consumers see, think, hear, and feel towards a sponsor brand (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). In addition, consumers who actively participate in a sponsorship experience are likely to have favourable attitudes and increased imagery enhancement towards a brand (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Brakus *et al.* (2009) state that participant involvement heightens a rich sensory experience, further illustrating how constructed experiences can be instructive, pleasing, entertaining and most importantly, impactful (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Fransen *et al.*, 2016). This is because consumers have become increasingly responsive to user-focused generated content

than they are towards traditional marketing (Dickson-Delaporte & Kerr, 2014). Impactful experiences have the potential to impact the way consumers see, hear, think and feel about a brand (Keller, 2016). Keller (2013) describes CBBE as the imprint that resides in the mind of a consumer regarding a brand.

#### 1.2.4. Customer-Based Brand Equity

Keller (2013) states that CBBE is the potential commercial value that a brand can derive based on a customer's perception towards that brand. CBBE lies in what a customer has learned, feel, seen and heard about the brand over time (Keller, 2016). CBBE is based on the consumers' perceptions but, influenced by how firms build and provide the right experiences through their products and services and their accompanying marketing collateral (Stahl, Heitmann, Lehmann, & Neslin, 2012). CBBE is comprised of four layers that brands need to be mindful of and understand to position in the mind of consumers (Keller, 2013). These four layers are as follows:

##### 1.2.4.1. *Identity*

The first layer of CBBE model seeks to quantify the depth and the breadth of a customer's awareness of a brand (Keller, 2016). Identity is about a brand answering the question, "who are we?" in the eyes of consumers (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014). Identity creates salience for brands which leads to imagery, the second layer in the model.

##### 1.2.4.2. *Meaning*

Imagery is about meeting consumers' needs, socially and psychologically (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014). Imagery is a result of a consumer's interactions with the brand (Stahl *et al.*, 2012). It is also about the performance and functionality of a firm's products (Keller, 2013). Reliability, durability and product pricing contribute towards customer opinions (Keller, 2013). Meaning leads to a firm's reputation which builds the third layer, responses.

##### 1.2.4.3. *Responses*

Responses encompass consumers' judgements and feelings towards a brand (Keller, 2013). Judgements are based on the relevance of a brand and its products to a consumer's needs and circumstances (Keller, 2016). A consumer responds to a brand

based on how it fares with competitors, and for brands who fare well, they are likely to elevate to the last layer, a relationship (Keller, 2013).

#### 1.2.4.4. Relationships

A relationship is considered the pinnacle of CBBE (Keller, 2013). It refers to the likelihood that a consumer will remain loyal to one brand, leading to strong resonance (Keller, 2013). In this layer, consumers assess their relationships and interactions with a firm to determine the brand's superiority to other brands (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014). Attributes like service, prices, products, and previous experiences all count towards creating relationships (Stahl *et al.*, 2012).

Building and maintaining a strong CBBE ensures that a brand remains top of mind, enjoys good salience, has good imagery, enjoys good consumer responses and has loyal customers (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014). From the existing literature, it is evident that brand experiences are a large contributor towards creating CBBE (Schmitt, 2010). Customer interactions play a significant role in how consumers think, feel, and respond to a brand (Groza, Cobbs, & Schaefer, 2012). Keller (2013) states that CBBE is built over long periods, however, the current behaviour of sponsor brands is contrary to the scholarly pronouncements. Groza *et al.* (2012) also state that impactful interactions are continual which leads to strong impressions in consumers' minds, this contradicts the current practice as experiences are deployed only within the duration of the short-term tournament. This creates a potential gap that this study seeks to address. The subsequent section delves into the problem statement that arises from the gap identified in the preceding evidence.

### 1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As firms continue to invest in title sponsorship of short-term tournaments- an expensive brand building exercise (Clark, Cornwell, & Pruitt, 2009), there is a need to understand the effectiveness of this relationship and provide means to interpret it. It is difficult for firms to accurately predict that brand experiences in short-term tournaments have a significant impact on customer-based brand equity. Keller (2013) states that CBBE is built over long periods of time as consumers do not make overall brand judgments based on limited interactions, thus, it remains hazy if the firm's brands achieve the desired impact on consumers' perceptions. Keller (2013) further

states that it takes time to build distinct impressions in the minds of consumers. CBBE is influenced by consumers' interactions with brand products, services, and accompanying marketing collateral (Stahl *et al.*, 2012). Firms with strong CBBE have strong, positive associations, and enjoy a great sense of loyalty from customers (Stahl *et al.*, 2012; Keller, 2013; 2016).

Firms are using sponsorship as means to get closer to consumers and influence what they see, hear, think, and feel (Schmitt, 2010). However, existing literature suggests that sponsorship has been effective to a degree in delivering impact in terms of awareness (Crompton, 2015) and to a lesser extent, image (Ozgoli, 2017). For firms which have opted to title sponsor short-term tournaments, there is also little evidence to suggest they have generated tangible impact (Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). Mamo (2015) argued that as a response, title sponsors of short-term tournaments have turned to brand experiences to aid sponsorship to deliver impact, particularly on CBBE. The introduction of brand experiences into the short-term tournament sponsorship and CBBE relationship has, to date received little attention in academia and as a result little evidence exists to substantiate the effectiveness of the relationship (Cornwell, Humphreys, Quinn & McAlister, 2012).

#### 1.4. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of brand experiences on customer-based brand equity in relation to short-term tournaments. The study investigates the relationship between title sponsorship, brand experiences and CBBE by focusing primarily on sponsors of short-term tournaments in South Africa. Suggested recommendations from the study might be used to improve the impact of brand experiences on CBBE.

#### 1.5. RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

This study rests on a research question, main objective and subsequent secondary objectives. A research question is defined as the inquiry that seeks to address the study problem (Thahn & Thahn, 2015). The research question was devised with consideration of the proposed framework and the main study objective. The research question is outlined below.

*To what extent do brand experiences in sponsorship influence customer-based brand equity?*

To expand on the research question, the main objective of this study is to determine if brand experiences have a significant impact on customer-based brand equity for firms that sponsor short-term tournaments. There are additional objectives outlined to aid answer the study question and they are as follows:

Secondary Objectives:

- i. To determine if title sponsorship of a short-term tournament contributes to building brand resonance
- ii. To establish how sponsor brands measure and evaluate the impact derived from sponsorship of a short-term tournament
- iii. To ascertain if soccer as a passion point is strong enough to elicit action

Due to the vastness of sponsorship as a subject area, this study probes the relationship between the variables from the perspective of brand custodians. The perspective from firms is valuable such that it unlocks the strategic imperatives and decisions that influence the relationship under study. The objectives provide a basis from a scientific view to understanding the impact of brand experiences on CBBE.

## 1.6. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

This study seeks to address the void of empirical data related to the relationship between title sponsorship of short-term tournaments, brand experiences, and CBBE. Research shows that title sponsorship and short-term tournaments as study topics are both under-served areas of study, with truly little empirical evidence (Cornwell *et al.*, 2012). The research probes a study area that is popular in practice but not in theory (Clark *et al.*, 2009). The outputs of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge by elucidating the impact on brands through title sponsorship of short-term tournaments and the deployment of brand experiences (Zinger & O'Reilly, 2010).

The research also alerts marketers of the potential that sponsorship has in creating lasting impact in consumers if the sponsored properties are well utilized (Meenaghan, 2013; Biscaia, Trail, Ross, & Yoshida, 2017). Lastly, the research paves new

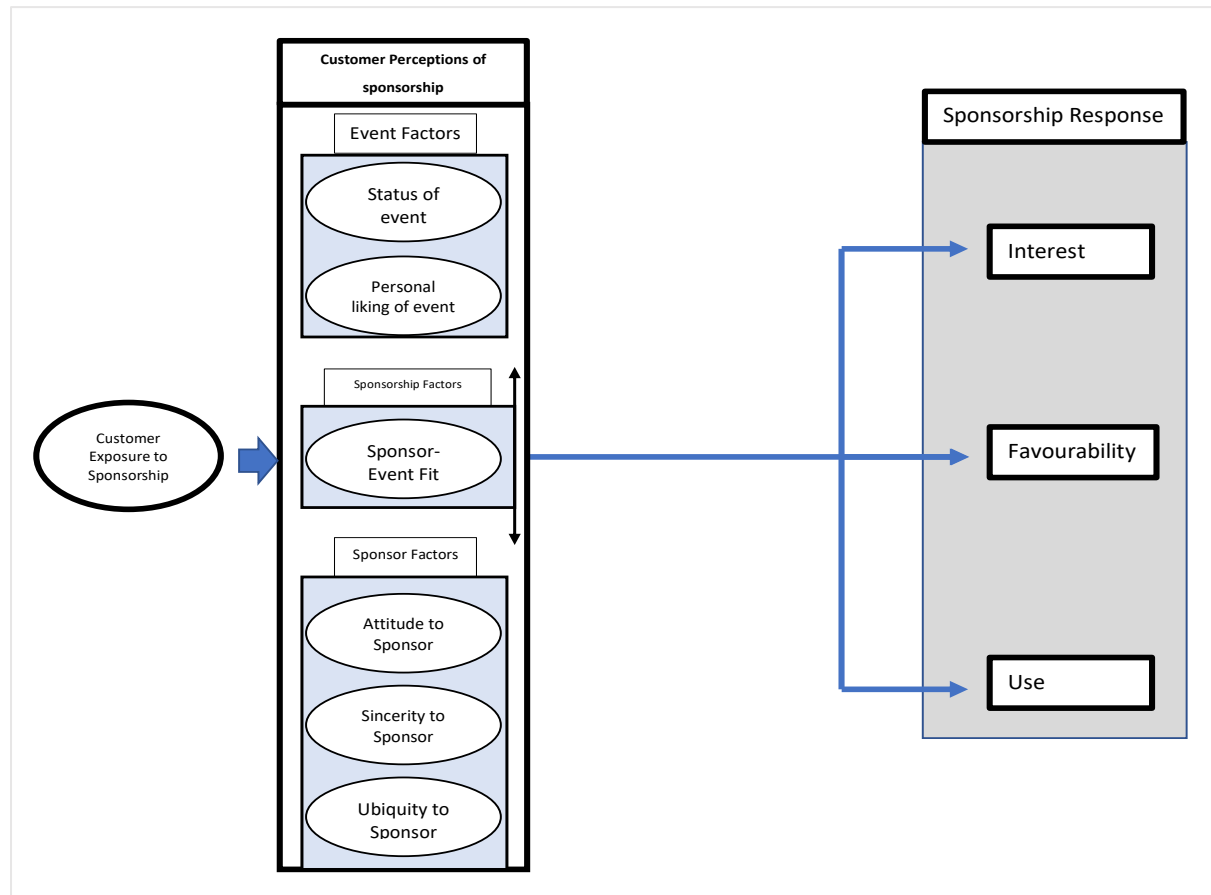
dimensions for future research in the field of sponsorship as it extends into title sponsorship and sponsorship of short-term tournaments, both of which have not received much academic attention (Clark *et al.*, 2009). The research is valuable as it presents a new theoretical framework that will aid in interpreting the relationship between the variables under study. The study uses the theoretical framework that combines three approaches to console the relationship under study. The model expands on the sponsorship framework by Speed and Thompson (2000) and integrates brand experiences by Khan and Rahman (2015) to understand the impact of brand experiences on CBBE (Keller, 2009). The other major contribution of this study is the integration of three different models to form an integrative theoretical framework. The proposed model is a response to the intersection of these subject areas as evident in practice but not in academia (Lanclos, 2017). Cornwell (2012) argued that there is a huge gap between practices in sponsorship and interpretation in academia where there is shortage of scientific frameworks for interpretation. This notion is also echoed by the IEG (International Events Group) that although popular, sports sponsorship still lacks theoretical frameworks (IEG, 2017).

### 1.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section first presents the existing scientific models adapted for the purposes of the development of this study's model. To meet the primary objective of this research and illustrate the impact of brand experiences on CBBE, this study combines existing theoretical works. The resultant framework is presented in Figure 1.4 below. The first component of the proposed model is the sponsorship response model adapted from Speed and Thompson (2000). The model focuses on sponsorship responses regarding what consumer responses to expect, and how to interpret them (Speed & Thompson, 2000). The model serves as cornerstone to the interpretation of sponsorship determinants as there is little academic update done thus makes it a point of reference.

Speed and Thompson (2000) identify and consolidate the key constructs that are major determinants in the justification of the relationship between sponsor brands, the sponsored event, and consumer responses. The framework is characterized by the hypothesis that a consumer will respond towards a sponsorship relationship based on attitude towards the sponsor brand, the event itself, and the perception of fit between

brand and event (Speed & Thompson, 2000). Speed and Thompson (2000) conceded that favourable responses towards sponsor brands were elicited whenever an event had a strong fit with the sponsor. The model is suited to provide a theoretical basis for this study as it culminates a variety of contributing factors such as the event itself, the sponsorship-fit, and the consumer as the end recipient (Speed & Thompson, 2000).

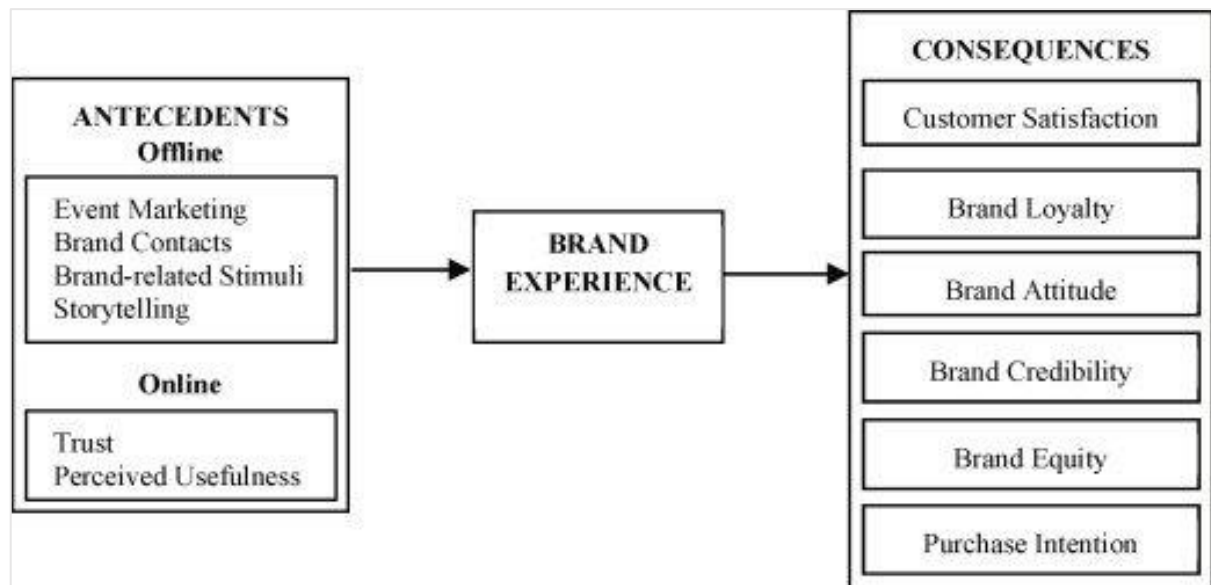


**Figure 1.1: Sponsorship Response Framework (Speed & Thompson, 2000)**

The brand experiences model (Figure 1.2) is a response to the gap identified between sponsorship activities and the desired consumer responses (Khan & Rahman, 2015). Figure 1.2 illustrates the responses that brands could achieve because of employing brand specific experiences (Khan & Rahman, 2015). The model integrates consumer consequences as brand equity, a component not illuminated in the sponsorship response model. The model shows that brand experiences play an important role in determining the desired outcomes and consequences (Khan & Rahman, 2015). For the purposes of this study, reference will be made to consequences that form CBBE,

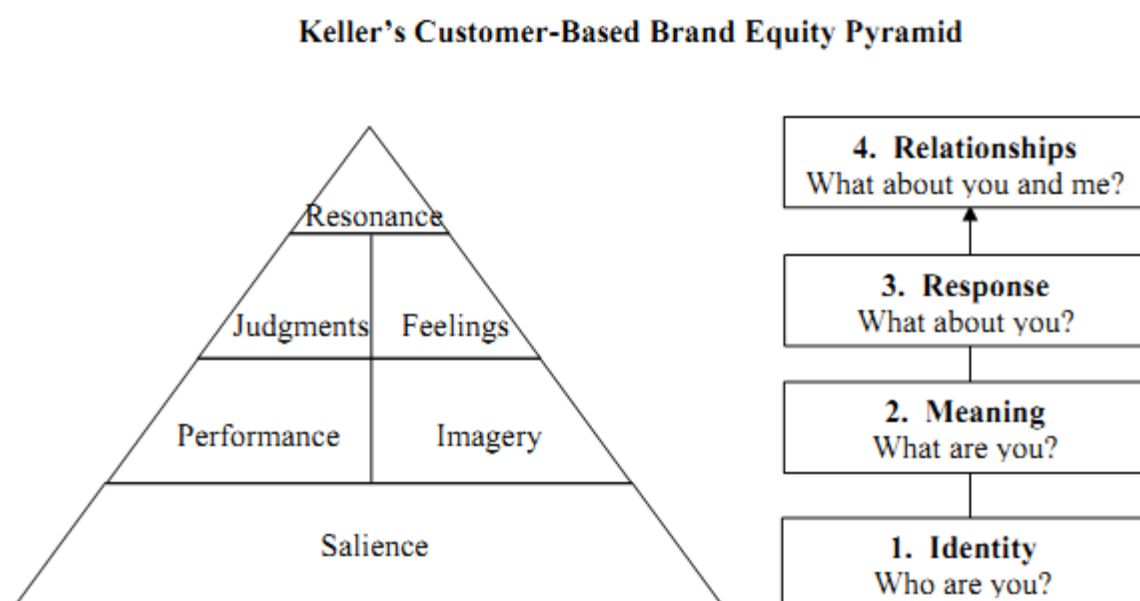


namely meaning, identity, responses, and relationships as theorized by Keller (2003; 2009).



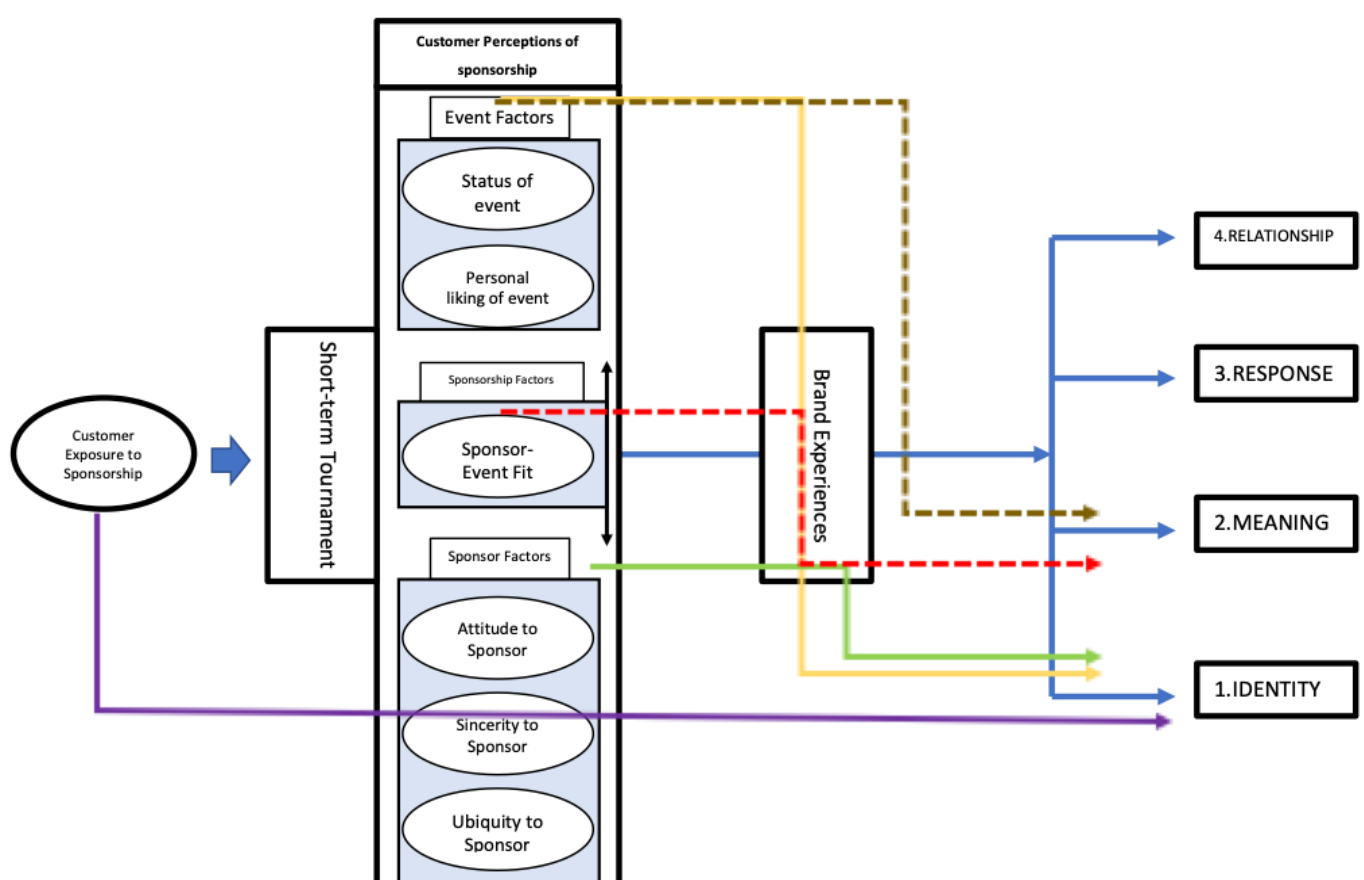
**Figure 1.2: Brand Experience Framework (Khan & Rahman, 2015)**

The last component of the proposed framework is the integration of the CBBE model by Keller (2003). Shown in Figure 1.3 below which shows the tiered consequences of impactful brand activities (Keller, 2013). CBBE is important for this study as it shows a consequence of an impactful brand activity. The models are discussed in detail in chapter 2 of the study.



**Figure 1.3: Customer-Based Brand Equity Framework (Keller, 2009)**

The relationship under study clearly integrates subject areas that have received great scholarly attention at a macro perspective. However, the relationship intersecting title sponsorship of short-term tournaments, brand experiences and building relationships is an uncharted avenue. Lanclos (2017) concedes that more research should be done to provide a holistic view of the relationship, highlighting the emergence of short-term tournaments and the traction they garner from title sponsors. The framework presented will help to address the research objective and qualify the hypotheses outlined in the preceding section.



**Figure 1.4: Sponsorship Experience Framework ((Speed & Thompson (2000), Khan & Rahman (2015), & Keller (2009))**

## 1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the research design and the methodological approach used. The study is exploratory in nature as it seeks to uncover and explain a relationship

that is not common in literature, and establishes a new operational reference (Malhotra, 2010). This design follows the interpretivist approach discussed below.

#### 1.8.1. Research Paradigm

Interpretivism allows researchers to probe the experiences of the study participants and interpret the data contextually (Thahn & Thahn, 2015). This approach is vital as it allows first-hand insights from the target population. Engagement with custodians of brands that sponsor short-term tournaments provided insights on motivations, objectives, and measurements used to deliver impact on their brands. Direct engagement with custodians was important as it sets context for the behaviour observed by probing the realities and the experiences of the participants (Tracy, 2013).

#### 1.8.2. Research Design

Research design is the strategy used to structure the research in a logical way (Tracy, 2013). Exploratory research was appropriate as the relationship under study has not received a lot of academic attention thus lacks a formal structure making it very flexible (Tracy, 2013). The literature reviewed set precedence for the development of the framework as evidence showed that there is no model that integrates or attempts to explain the study relationship (Salo, 2011).

#### 1.8.3. Research Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was applied in this study. The interpretivist research paradigm decided upon, informed the use of a qualitative research approach. The study was motivated by the paradigm's direct investigative nature with respondents (Thahn & Thahn, 2015).

#### 1.8.4. Target Population

Malhotra (2010) defines a target population as a distinct group of people that is identified as the focus for a scientific query. Tracy (2013) argues that because populations are large, a smaller portion representing the characteristics of the group must be identified and selected for investigation. The target population for this study were firms that sponsored tournaments in the South African PSL. The size of the

population could not be ascertained, however, four executives from sponsoring firms were involved in this study.

#### 1.8.5. Sampling

Malhotra (2010) posits that selecting the appropriate and suited sample is the most important activity in methodology. A suited sample ensures that the correct data is collected to answer the research question (Taylor *et al.*, 2015). To ensure that the list was filtered such that it was representative of the required target sample for the study, a non-probability purposeful sampling technique was employed. Tracy (2013) defines non-probability purposeful sampling as sampling where data sources are chosen based on the parameters of the study's research design, objectives and purposes.

#### 1.8.6. Data Collection

In line with the objectives of the study, in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with the target audience. An interview discussion guide containing predetermined and structured questions was used to guide the interview process (Trotter, 2012).

#### 1.8.7. Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis refers to the process of developing answers to the study objective through investigation and presentation of data gathered (Malhotra, 2010). The analysis was done through use of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), the Nvivo11 package (Lakeman, 2009). To align with the thematic framework, the explanation and causality strategy was used for analysis.

### 1.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Tracy (2013) states that practicing ethics in qualitative research requires the consideration of rules and procedures, together with consideration of the different contexts in which the research is conducted. This is true for this study, the researcher ensured strict adherence and compliance with the ethical rules and procedural ethics as stipulated by the University of Cape Town research guidelines. The measurement instrument was verified and approved by the University of Cape Town Commerce Faculty Ethics Research Committee.

### 1.10. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

In this section, the scope and limitations of the study are discussed. First, the researcher discusses the scope of the study followed by the limitations. The scope of the study was to uncover and get first-hand account about the integration of short-term tournaments sponsorship, brand experiences, and CBBE from sponsor brands. Sponsor firms recognised by the PSL, more precisely those firms sponsoring short-term tournaments formed the scope of the study. Lastly, the research set precedence for future research as it probed a study area that is popular in practice but has received little academic attention.

#### 1.10.1. Limitations of the Study

Study limitations refer to characteristics of the study design that are likely to impact the outcome and the interpretation of the research results (Malhotra, 2010; Schultze & Avital, 2011). The biggest limitation for the study was the sample size. The sample size for this study was four executives from four soccer sponsor firms in South Africa. Small sample sizes limit the generalisability of research findings; however, this limitation is organic. As seen in the sample selection, the sponsorship sample itself was limited to a few firms in South Africa, particularly short-term tournament sponsors.

Therefore, the total size in the sample frame is equal to the selected sample. Another limitation as identified by Tracy (2013) prevalent in this study is the fact that qualitative data is subjective and mostly based on the participant's context thus there is no way for the researcher to verify the outputs objectively to generalize the research outputs. Bernard (2011) argues that a sample with experts is generally small but acceptable as they are knowledgeable in the field and are able to provide unique insights that are context based. Furthermore, research needs to validate whether brands want to use their sponsorship properties to build resonance or not, as the existing strategies have stayed clear of this CBBE attribute. Even with these limitations, the researcher stayed true to the research instrument worthiness and the ethical considerations discussed above.

### 1.11. ORGANISATION OF STUDY

This thesis follows the marketing research process as outlined by Malhotra (2010). It starts off by providing an introductory chapter that gives the reader an overview of the study by setting the context and discussing the study objective. The objective is to familiarize the reader with the study topic and set context for the rest of the thesis. The second chapter of the study introduces the theoretical frameworks from which the study's proposed model derives. The model introduced is motivated by the gaps identified in the literature.

Chapter three of the study presents the literature review and illuminates the gaps identified in the literature. The literature provides context into what has been done in the field of study with reference to short-term tournament sponsorship, brand experiences, and CBBE. Chapter four describes and explains the research design used in the study. The chapter provides the methodology and the motivations utilised to gather adequate data from the research participants.

The fifth chapter presents the data findings from fieldwork. The chapter uses the antecedents and consequences analysis strategy to analyse the data gathered and to also verify the thematic hypotheses presented for this research.

The last chapter thereafter summarises the study's findings, draws conclusions and recommendations for practice and academia. The chapter also presents ideas and thoughts for future research in the short-term tournament sponsorship arena. The chapter is thereafter followed by a list of references used in the study.

### 1.12. CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter intended to acquaint the reader with the background for the study, and introduce the themes under study; sponsorship, brand experiences and CBBE. The chapter also introduces the research objective and the corresponding framework adapted from existing frameworks that overarch the relationship under study. In addition, the methodology is summarily explained. Lastly, the chapter discusses the ethical considerations and the limitations that could potential impact the generalisability of the study findings. The following chapter discusses the theoretical works that underpin this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

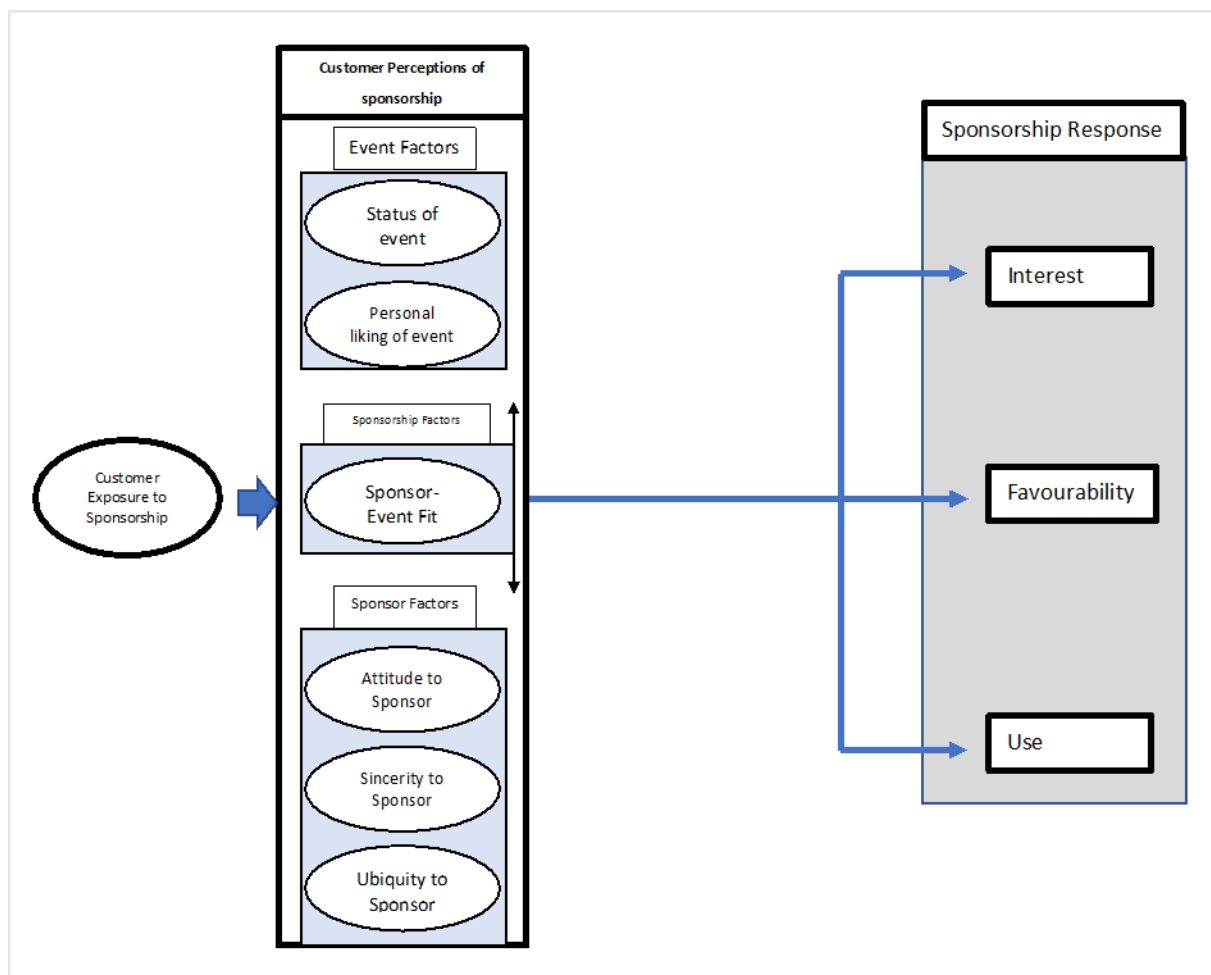
This chapter introduces the theoretical framework that guides the study. The framework advanced below is an amalgamation of existing models or theoretical works to enable the research to fully probe the objectives presented. In the succeeding literature review chapter, the researcher demonstrates that there is no comprehensive model that integrates the three study variables nor explains the relationship. The sponsorship variable is adopted from Speed and Thompson (2000), the brand experience variable is adopted from Khan and Rahman (2015), and the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) is taken from Keller (2009). This study is premised on the illustration in Figure 4 below represents the integrated framework visualising the proposed relationship.

### **2.2. THEORETICAL WORKS UNDERPINNING THIS STUDY**

To meet the primary objective of this research and illustrate the impact of brand experiences on CBBE, this study combines existing theoretical approaches. The resultant framework is presented in Figure 2.4 below. The section first presents the existing scientific models adapted for the purposes of the development of this study's model. The first component of the proposed model is the sponsorship response model adapted from Speed and Thompson (2000). The model focuses on sponsorship responses regarding what consumer responses to expect, and how to interpret them (Speed & Thompson, 2000). The model serves as cornerstone to the interpretation of sponsorship determinants as there is little academic update done thus makes it a point of reference.

The model presented by Speed and Thompson (2000) identifies and consolidates the key constructs that are major determinants in the justification of the relationship between sponsor brands, the sponsored event, and consumer responses. The framework is characterised by the hypothesis that a consumer responds towards a sponsorship relationship based on attitude towards the sponsor brand, the event itself, and the perception of fit between brand and event (Speed & Thompson, 2000).

The framework by Speed and Thompson (2000) conceded that favourable responses towards sponsor brands were elicited whenever an event had a strong fit with the sponsor. They also added that perceptions held of other brand assets influenced consumer attitudes and the effectiveness of the sponsorship relationship (Speed & Thompson, 2000). The model works great to illicit the sponsorship decision process as discussed in chapter three, however, it falls short in terms of the kind of stimuli that a consumer would be responding to. This limitation plays a significant impact on interpretation as it rests on the longevity of the sponsored event. The proposed model addresses this by including short-term tournaments as a perception determinant.

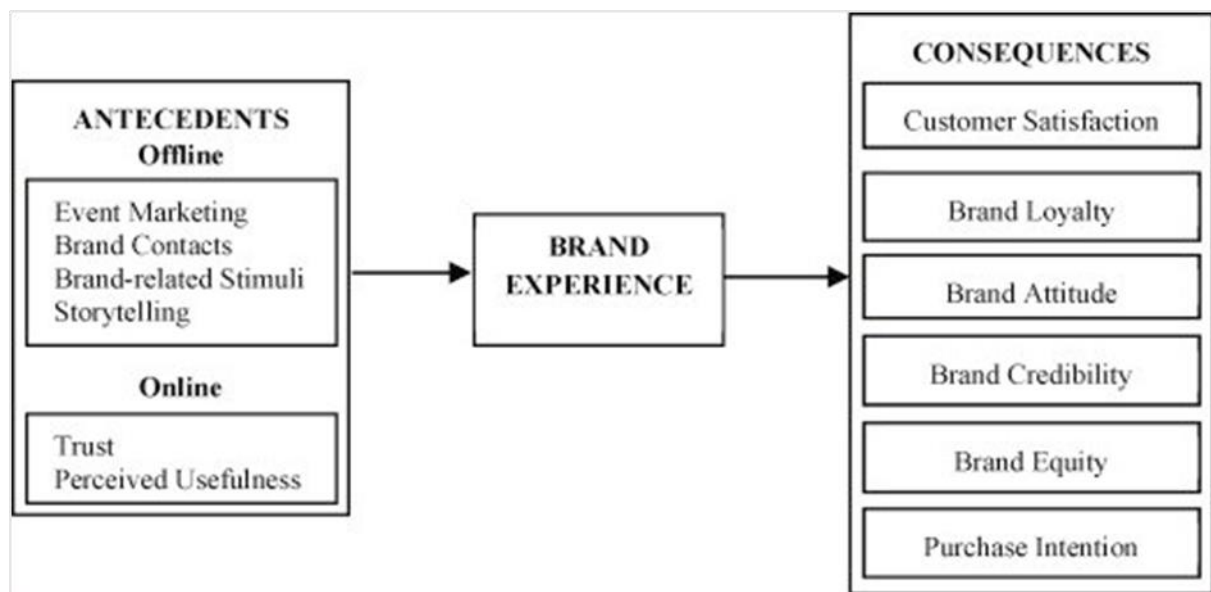


**Figure 2.1: Sponsorship Response Framework (Speed & Thompson, 2000)**

The model is suited to provide a theoretical basis for this study as it culminates a variety of contributing factors such as the event itself, the sponsorship-fit, and the



consumer as the end recipient (Speed & Thompson, 2000). These factors are crucial in the overall study relationship as they impact the type of sponsorship, the type of tournament, participants, and congruency (Speed & Thompson, 2000). But to fully realize the effectiveness of sponsorship as an entity, brands need to devise compelling activities and interactions to achieve the desired responses (Groza et al., 2012). From this gap in the sponsorship response model, this study's proposed framework introduces the brand experiences component by Khan and Rahman (2015).

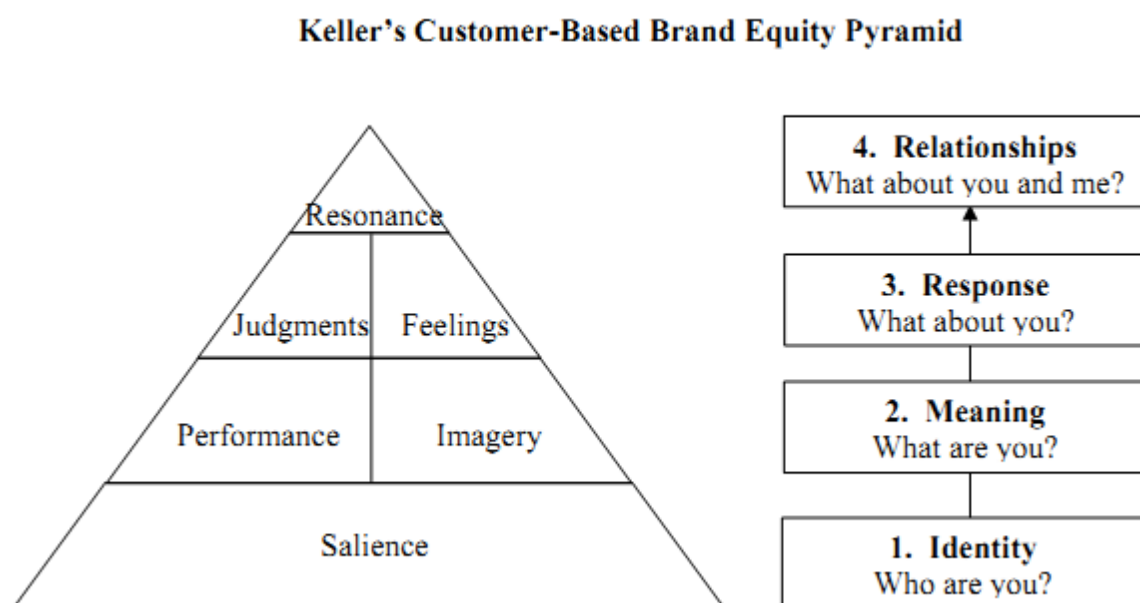


**Figure 2.2: Brand Experience Framework (Khan & Rahman, 2015)**

The brand experiences model illustrated in Figure 2.2 is a response to the gap identified between sponsorship activities and the desired consumer responses (Khan & Rahman, 2015). Figure 2.2 illustrates the responses that brands could achieve because of employing brand specific experiences (Khan & Rahman, 2015). The model integrates consumer consequences as brand equity, a component not illustrated in the sponsorship response model. This is an important component for this study based on previous academic evidence which states that sponsorship can potentially impact awareness (Crompton, 2015), and to a lesser extent, image (Ozgoli, 2017). The antecedent for this study is short-term tournaments and its accompanying online and offline collateral. The model shows that brand experiences play an important role in determining the desired outcomes and consequences (Khan & Rahman, 2015). For

the purposes of this study, reference will be made to consequences that form CBBE, namely meaning, identity, responses, and relationships as theorized by Keller (2003; 2009).

The consequence or the last component of the proposed framework is the integration of the CBBE model (Keller, 2009). The staggered CBBE model (Figure 2.3) is a theoretical model that illustrates the tiered consequences of impactful brand activities (Keller, 2013). It shows that if there are collective efforts across a brand's assets, then a consumer will likely form a relationship with that particular brand (Keller, 2013). CBBE is important for this study as it shows a consequence of an impactful brand activity.



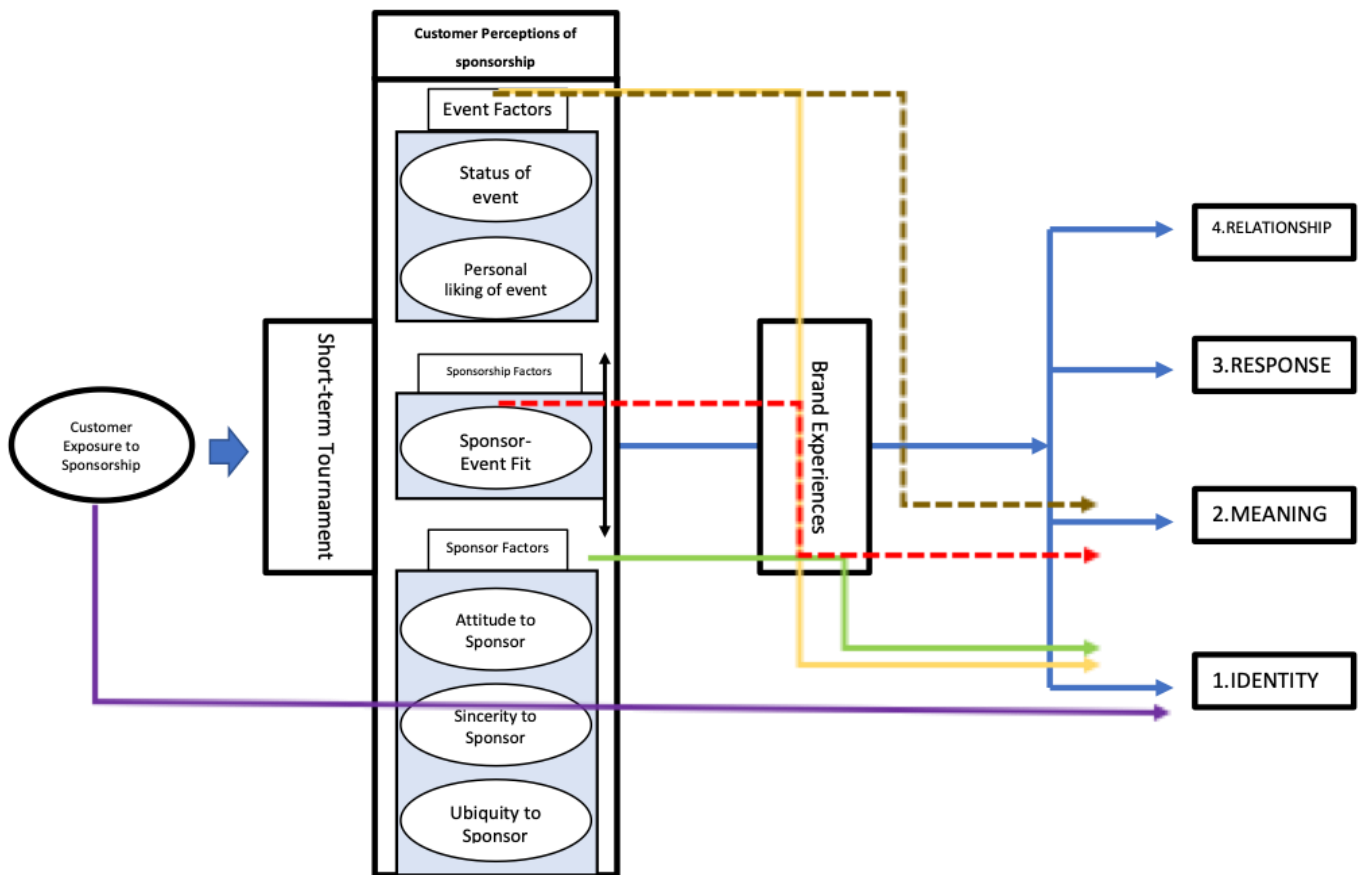
**Figure 2.3: Customer-Based Brand Equity Framework (Keller, 2009)**

The integration of the three theoretical frameworks forms the proposed model for this study. The proposed model (Figure 2.4) is a response to the intersection of these subject areas as evident in practice but not in academia (Lanclos, 2017). Cornwell (2012) argued that there is a huge gap between practices in sponsorship and interpretation in academia where there is shortage of scientific frameworks for interpretation. This notion is also echoed by the IEG (International Events Group) that although immensely popular, sports sponsorship still lacks theoretical frameworks (IEG, 2017).

The relationship in the study clearly integrates subject areas receiving great scholarly attention at a macro perspective level. However, the relationship intersecting title sponsorship of short-term tournaments, brand experiences and building relationships is an uncharted avenue. Lanclos (2017) concedes that more research should be done to provide a holistic view of the relationship, highlighting the emergence of short-term tournaments and the traction they garner from title sponsors. The conceptual framework presented in this study, focuses on how brand experiences can impact customer-based brand equity in short-term tournaments. The research seeks to fill the gap between title sponsorship of short-term tournaments and building customer-based brand equity using brand experiences, by studying football sponsors in South Africa. The framework presented might help to address the research objective and to qualify the hypotheses outlined in the preceding section.

Literature shows that there is currently a relationship that exists between sponsorship and CBBE, the relationship pertains to identity which is the first tenet of CBBE (Salo, 2011; Keller, 2013). Identity is impacted by several components in the relationship and is easy to impact (Crompton, 2015). Identity is primarily because of exposure to a brand which drives up brand awareness enabling consumers to effectively attribute a brand using different brand collateral (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014). Ozgoli (2017) argues that sponsorship can potentially impact meaning, the second tenet of CBBE, however, acknowledges that this relationship is faint. This assertion is denoted by the dotted relationship on the proposed model (See Figure 2.4).

The relationship that exists between sponsorship and CBBE is not enough to illuminate this union (Salo, 2011), which warrants the need for this research and the illustration of the proposed model. The said intention of sponsorship does not only end with awareness but extends to tangible benefits for sponsor brands (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Renard and Sitz (2011) state that sponsorship aims to achieve brand objectives that are not limited to advertising, direct marketing, sales, publicity, and importantly, relationship building. Chavanat and Bodet (2014) argue that providing and creating interactions that are memorable can certainly deliver the desired impact on brands. This conclusion warrants the testing of brand experiences as an intervening variable between sponsorship and CBBE. The amalgamation of these three variables therefore serves as basis to interpret the relationship holistically.



**Figure 2.4: Sponsorship Experience Framework (Speed & Thompson (2000), Khan & Rahman (2015), & Keller (2009))**

This proposed framework (Figure 2.4) aims to build on the contributions from the literature to solidify the framework to explain how experiences in short-term tournaments can build CBBE.

### 2.3. INTEGRATED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The adapted theoretical framework entrenches the three main thematic variables of this study, sponsorship of a short-term tournament, brand experiences and CBBE. The constructs for the integrated theoretical framework are discussed in this section.

### 2.3.1. Short-Term Tournaments

A short-term tournament is a series of games played between contestants, the games are played over a short period of time and there is a specific criterion for inclusion, advancement and elimination (Byl, 2014). As short-term tournaments continue to be popular amongst sponsor brands, they also determine the sensitisation and adaptation of experiences (Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). The framework will help answer the uncovered motivations behind the reasons for sponsoring short-term tournaments as title sponsors. Secondly, the framework will help the researcher to ascertain which tenets of CBBE sponsor brands seek to impact through title sponsorship of short-term tournaments. Short-term tournaments serve as an independent variable in the theoretical framework and for this research.

### 2.3.2. Brand Experiences

Brand experiences are staged encounters designed by sponsoring brands to engage consumers (Biscaia et al., 2017). Brand experiences help to determine the kind of interactions consumers have with sponsor brands (Fransen *et al.*, 2011). These active interactions play a critical role in enhancing a consumer's perception towards a brand and play a role in creating long lasting impact in the minds of the consumer (Keller, 2016). The experiences serve as an intervening variable to the research, by helping the researcher determine the impact of brands on CBBE in terms of meaning, identity, responses and relationships through sponsorship of a short-term tournament.

### 2.3.3. CBBE

With reference to the framework, CBBE is the dependent variable in the research. CBBE is highly dependent on the kind of experiences that occur during a tournament (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014). Literature has shown that experiences can impact awareness and to a lesser extent, meaning. This framework seeks to understand if experiences are enough to impact all the tenets especially relationships with consumers. This element of the framework aims to identify which elements of experiences brands deem strong enough to impact CBBE. The framework will help to understand if CBBE can be impacted by brand experiences that are employed during short-term tournaments. This chapter sheds light into the amalgamated theoretical framework that will be employed in the study. It integrates the three important variables

chronologically to understand the resultant relationships. The chapter below focuses on the research design and the methodological approach used in the study.

## 2.4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the researcher provided detailed explanation of the adapted/integrated theoretical works that underpin this study. To meet the primary objective of this research and illustrate the impact of brand experiences on CBBE, this study combined the sponsorship response model which focuses on sponsorship responses regarding what consumer responses to expect, and how to interpret them. The model serves as cornerstone to the interpretation of sponsorship determinants as there is little academic update done thus makes it a point of reference.

Secondly the brand experiences model which identified gaps between sponsorship activities and the desired consumer responses was adopted in this study followed by the CBBE model that illustrates the tiered consequences of impactful brand activities. The CBBE shows that if there are collective efforts across a brand's assets, then a consumer will form a relationship with that brand. The constructs of the adapted theoretical framework were discussed before the chapter. In the next chapter, the researcher discusses pertinent issues relating the subject under investigation through the literature review lens.

## CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the literature that underpins this study. The chapter has three sections that encompass the macro themes fundamental to the research, namely: commercial sponsorship, brand experiences, and customer-based brand equity. Section one addresses sponsorships, its motivations, and introduces short-term tournaments. In addition, the researcher synthesizes discussions in chapter two with discussions in this literature review chapter through the theoretical lens. This synthesis helps to elucidate the concepts of sponsorship marketing CBBE and brand experiences.

### 3.2. SPONSORSHIP

Amoaka *et al.*, (2012) states that sponsorship is a commercial relationship measured by marketing objectives versus the return on investment outcomes. Javalgi, Traylor, Gross & Lampman (1994) define sponsorship as the underwriting of an event “to support corporate objectives by enhancing corporate image, increasing awareness, and directly stimulating sales”. A comprehensive definition of sponsorship is:

*“Sponsorship is the provision of resources (e.g. money, people, equipment) by an organization (the sponsor) directly to an individual, authority or body (the sponsored), to enable the sponsored to pursue some activity (e.g. participation by the sponsored) in return for benefits contemplated in terms of the sponsor’s marketing communication strategy (cross-impact and leverage between sponsorship and other marketing communication variables employed before, during, and after the sponsorship campaign), which can be expressed in terms of corporate, marketing, sales or media objectives”* (Amoako, Dartey-Baah, Dzigbenuku, & Kwesie Jr, 2012: 66).

Sponsorship has become a crucial component in marketing, more-so in communicating firms’ symbolic attributes and delivering experiences for consumers (Bodet, 2013). Literature shows that there is currently a relationship that exists between sponsorship and CBBE, the relationship pertains to identity which is the first

tenet of CBBE (Salo, 2011; Keller, 2013). Ozgoli (2017) argues that sponsorship can potentially impact meaning, the second tenet of CBBE, however, acknowledges that this relationship is faint. This assertion is denoted by the dotted relationship on the proposed model.

Over the past three decades, there has been a significant shift in marketing away from the ratification of products' physical aspects and functional benefits towards products' symbolic overtones (Schmitt, 2011; Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Firms no longer use their marketing to emphasize the aspects of their products but instead to convey messages and experiences that alter and positively impact consumers' perceptions of the brand over competitors (Schmitt, 2011; Meenaghan, 2013). Consumers also have increased expectations on how firms should communicate and engage with them (Fransen *et al.*, 2013). As a response, firms have turned to sponsorships to interact with consumers through their passion points (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014).

The commercial relationship expressed above is a two-way mutually beneficial relationship between a sponsor and a sponsored property whereby the sponsor brand provides resources to the sponsored property and in return receives exclusive benefits for being associated with the property (Renard & Sitz, 2011). Sponsorship is characterised by the provision of resources by a firm to a sponsored property enabling the latter to pursue activities with the agreement of contemplated benefits for the sponsor in terms of the sponsor's marketing strategy (Donlan & Crowther, 2014).

Renard and Sitz (2011) state that for the resources provided, sponsors can leverage the sponsored property in terms of their media objectives, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotions, publicity and personal selling. Importantly, all these activities are done to get closer to the consumer, to create interactions that are personable, that allow consumers to experience the firm beyond its products and services (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014).

Henseler, Wilson and Westberg (2011) argue that there are different objectives that drive companies to "sponsor" a property the distinction is between sponsoring and donating. Sponsorship is driven by commercial characteristics whilst donating is driven by philanthropy (Henseler *et al.*, 2011). Bodet and Bernache-Assollant (2011) state

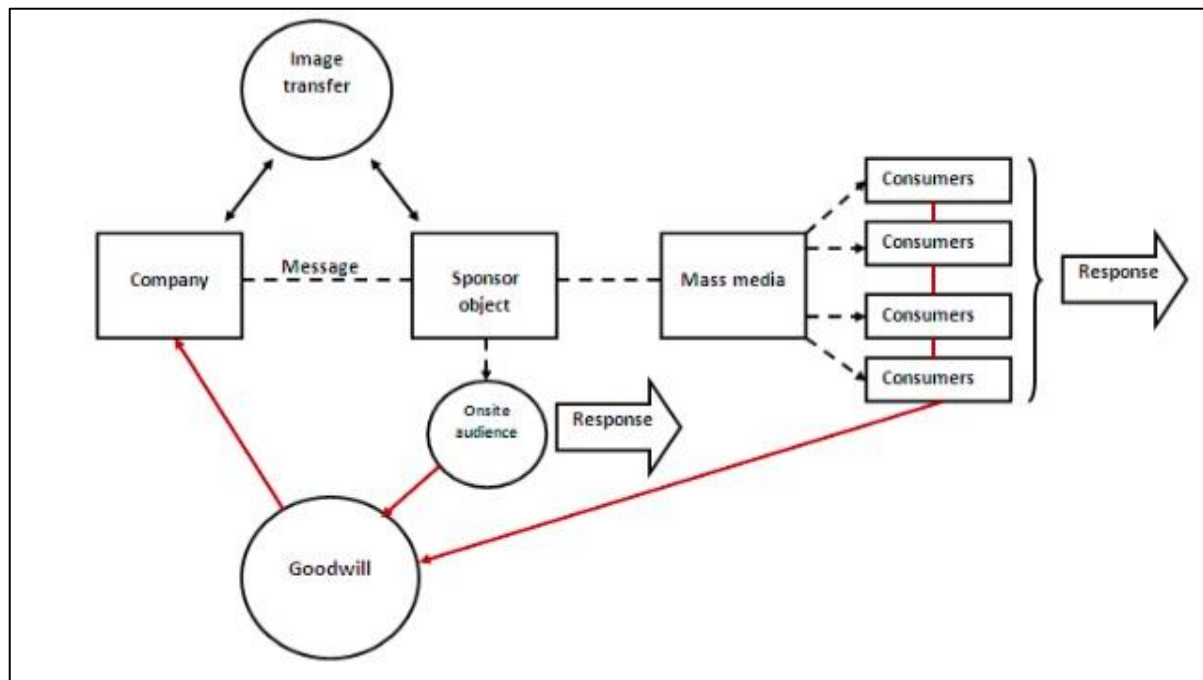


that sponsorship is the practice of affinity marketing that provides rights and benefits to the sponsor. These rights provide exclusive access to a venue, personality, or event where the sponsor is likely to leverage the host's properties for brand exposure and connect with consumers (Bodet & Chavanat, 2014).

Sponsorship is a valuable brand building tool that allows firms to achieve a wide range of their marketing objectives (Humphreys, Cornwell, McAlister, Kelly, Quinn, & Murray, 2010). It has become an all-encompassing tool that integrates aspects of advertising to enable firms to achieve their marketing and communication objectives (Humphreys *et al.*, 2010). According to Donlan and Crowther (2014), sponsorship is one tool in the marketing spectrum that enables firms to craft activities that are participative, relational, and experiential to build deeper and meaningful relations with consumers. Literature suggests that firms can utilise the sponsored properties, the voluntary and active involvement by event attendees, to promote collaborative experiences that build the brand (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Sponsorship is an instrumental component in the marketing mix, and this discussed in detail below.

### 3.2.1. Sponsorship in the Marketing Mix

Donlan & Crowther (2014) posit that sponsorship allows firms to achieve all their marketing objectives in one. Research by Walraven (2013) posited that sponsorship is used both as a promotional tool and a platform to deploy other promotional tools. Firms have mastered the ability to use sponsorship to communicate with their target market through transmittable messages embedded in the brand name using media, broadcast or oral material (Crompton, 2015). Shimp (2010) states that sponsorship is the practice of promoting the interests of the sponsor business and its brands by associating the business or its products with a specific cause or event. Contrary to other marketing communication activities, which are often executed in isolation, sponsorship activities are often integrated and comprise of other marketing and promotional tools (Mulin *et al.*, 2007). Speed and Thompson (2000) developed the below sponsorship communication model (Figure 3.1) to illustrate how brands can craft messages and integrate them into a system to interact with consumers.



**Figure 3.1: Sponsorship Communication Model (Speed & Thompson, 2000)**

Speed and Thompson (2000) also argue that sponsorship is a versatile marketing function that enables businesses to dispatch all their marketing communication efforts given its many qualities and advantages only unique to sponsorship. Literature suggests that the versatility allows sponsorship to fulfil basic functions of the other tools of the marketing communication mix (Donlan & Crowther, 2014).

Meenaghan (2013) believes that to understand sponsorship, is important to make the distinction between advertising and sponsorship as a communication tool. Meenaghan (2013) advances the argument that sponsorship is on the rise because it is one tool that can easily differentiate brands (2013). Fullerton (2010) states that sponsorship should be a tool that combines tools from the promotional toolkit. Fullerton (2010) reiterates the famous example presented by Kurtz and Boone (2006) that sponsorship is a form of advertising that includes print and broadcast advertisements referring to the event or activity, but it also has direct mails and sales promotions, publicity in the form of media coverage of the event, and also personal selling, prior to the event at point of sales, during the match and post the match.

Fullerton (2010) posits that sponsorship can act as a theme, incorporating advertising, public relations, sales and relationship marketing to enhance the overall effect of a brand campaign. Regarding public relations and advertising, Meenaghan (2013) argues that the quality and the quantity of coverage is beyond the control of the sponsor whereas in advertising, all aspects are controlled by the advertiser. Moreover, it is easier to control and measure advertising, as argued by Shilbury, Westerbeek, Quick, Funk and Karg (2014). Fullerton (2010) notes that sponsorship is a distinct marketing tool that is interactive, provides a platform for engagement with a live audience, an important tenet in terms of eliciting a personality for the brand.

It is evident that sponsorship is an integral part of the marketing communication mix, it lends itself to all the tools of the mix (Fullerton, 2010), Sponsorship cannot be treated in isolation but should instead be regarded as a complementary tool to the mix (Shilbury *et al.*, 2014). Hermann, Kacha and Derbaix (2016) point out the advantages that firms can derive through pursuing sponsorship, below is a detailed list of the advantages of pursuing sponsorship and these are discussed below.

### 3.2.2. Advantages of Sponsorships

Scholars argue that sponsorship is a critical component of a firm's promotional toolkit (Walraven, 2013). Sponsorship complements the other tools in marketing (Shilbury *et al.*, 2014). Schmitt (2013) states that sponsorship is the fastest growing and most impactful marketing method. Schmitt (2013) further argues that sponsorship is a highly interactive communication medium that allows consumers to experience a brand in proximity. Furthermore, sponsorship allows for face-to-face meetings with consumers resulting in memorable brand images (Schmitt, 2013).

Importantly, sponsorship not only stimulates and persuades consumers to change how consumers see the brand, but also has potential to create strong brand equity by implanting memorable consumer experiences (Lee, 2015). The advantages presented by Schmitt (2011) and Lee (2015) are of particular interest to this research as they align with the study objectives, namely: awareness, image, intent to purchase and sales.

#### 3.2.2.1. *Impact on Awareness*

The use of sponsorship to create or increase brand awareness is well documented in marketing literature (Thjomoe, Olson & Bronn, 2002; Meenaghan, 2013). In Keller's book, dubbed the marketing bible, Keller (1993) describes awareness as the ability of a consumer to recognize a brand under different conditions (Keller, 2013). Customers with high levels of awareness can recognise a brand even through de-branded collateral (Keller, 2013).

Crompton (2015) argues that sponsorship plays an incredibly significant role in uplifting the spontaneous awareness especially amongst groups who had no prior or limited exposure to the sponsor brand. Sponsorship solidifies top-of-mind awareness as its premium benefits (Cornwell, 2011). Evidence shows that sponsorship has a positive impact on awareness, it helps brands remain top in the minds of consumers (Amoaka *et al.*, 2012). Cornwell and Gabel (1996: 296) deduced that "if a brand is out of sight, it is out of mind" as cited in Cornwell *et al.* (2012). It is evident that sponsorship delivers considerable impact on awareness more-so for brands with lower awareness and solidifies top-of-mind awareness for brands with high awareness levels (Henseler *et al.*, 2011).

#### 3.2.2.2. *Impact on Image*

Image refers to the linkage of a brand to an attribute in the consumer's mind (Keller, 2013). Brands that sponsor sports are associated with attributes such as youthful, energetic, speed, fitness, etc., e.g. the energy drink, Red Bull is strongly associated with extreme sports (Farrelly, Quester & Burton, 2006). Image enhancement is an important component to building a trustworthy and a credible brand and requires that firms pay special attention to the kinds of events they associate with (Keller, 2016).

Brand imagery is key in establishing relationships with consumers and is also the one tenet that will enhance consumers' perceptions (Keller, 2013). Sponsors can utilise an event's image to enhance their own (Ozgoli, 2017). Sponsorship enhances the image that consumers already have of the sponsor brand (Ozgoli, 2017). Firms that have a good image before they engage in sponsorship will reinforce their existing image if there is a good fit between the sponsor and the sponsored property (Salo, 2011). Cornwell, Roy and Steinard (2001) established that the perceived contribution from

sponsorship is more explicit on imagery and on awareness than it is on personality, loyalty and other brand differentiating factors.

#### 3.2.2.3. *Impact on Purchase Intent*

According to Biscaia *et al.*, (2017), the impact that a sponsorship has on sales is the most desired measure of sponsorship effectiveness. Meenaghan (2013) and Biscaia *et al.* (2017) argue that sales and market share have been the key objectives for pursuing sponsorship. The product adoption process outlined by Crompton (2004) suggests that potential purchasers move from awareness, to interest, to intent to purchase before embarking on an actual buying action. Koronios, Psiloutsikou, Kriemadis, Zervoulakos and Leivaditi (2016) conclude that consumers who simply believe that a company's brand is involved in sponsorship tend to have a higher intent to purchase the company's products or services. Furthermore, Koronios *et al.* (2016) state that if a consumer is involved with the sponsored tournament, whether as a spectator or participant, they will show their support for the sponsor brand by purchasing the brand's products.

#### 3.2.2.4. *Impact on Sales*

The most desirable yet understated measure for sponsors is the impact sponsorship delivers on actual sales (Salo, 2011), although many sponsors do not openly tag products onto their sponsorship activities, the objective to increase foot traffic at retail points of sale is almost innate (Crompton, 2015). An approach for using sponsorship to impact sales is to deploy sponsorship-themed promotional materials at different points of sales, tying the sponsorship collateral markers and messages into actual products (Blake *et al.*, 2018).

#### 3.2.2.5. *Sponsorship Exclusivity*

When companies negotiate to get into a sponsorship agreement or contract, they start off by negotiating exclusivity (Schmitt, 2011). Exclusivity ensures that the sponsor brand or anchor brand has exclusive rights to the sponsored property and can utilize without interference by other sponsors (Biscaia *et al.*, 2017). The biggest advantage drawn from exclusivity is high levels of exposure without having to worry about cluttering with brands, which is very synonymous with traditional advertising (Biscaia, Correia, & Rosado, 2013).

#### 3.2.2.6. *Relationship Marketing*

Armstrong & Kotler (2009) state that businesses involved in sponsorships utilize it to build long lasting relationships with their clients. Equally, firms use sponsorship to find innovative ways to acquire new loyal customers. According to Mullin *et al.* (2014) these relationships stem from memorable experiences provided by the sponsor brand.

#### 3.2.2.7. *Competition*

Companies engage in sponsorship to counter threats presented by their competition, they aim to be first to market before their competitors invest ahead of them (Shank, 2009). If a competitor secures sponsorship rights first, they get an edge in terms of top of mind awareness, consideration and relationship building (Shank, 2009). Not all sponsor firms enjoy the above-mentioned direct and indirect advantages of sponsorship solely of the premise of sponsoring a property (Cornwell *et al.*, 2001). This is because firms pursue sponsorship for different reasons, their motives drive the kinds of gains they can derive. Mamo (2015) drew a distinction in the sponsorship market to classify the different motives, namely; Philanthropy and commercial motivations.

#### 3.2.3. Categories of Sponsorships

Over the years, many scholars have tried to make a distinction within sponsorship market, the classification is between philanthropy and corporate or commercial sponsorship (Mamo, 2015). Sponsorship classification stems from the brand objectives (Cornwell *et al.*, 2012). By sponsoring a property, a firm pays money or material possessions to support an issue, a cause or an event that is consistent with the business's objectives (Shank, 2009). The most sponsored properties are festivals, fairs, personalities, sports, arts and entertainment, charity benefits, conventions and expositions (Mamo, 2015).

According to Shimp (2010), there are two broad types of sponsorship, namely event- and cause-related sponsorships. Event-related sponsorship, herein referred to as commercial sponsorship, is characterized as a form of brand promotion that ties a brand to a specific athlete, entertainment, social, cultural or other high-interest public activity (Shimp, 2010). Importantly, "*commercial sponsorship is not advertising, it*

*incorporates all tools associated with marketing communication*” (Shimp, 2010: 567). Cause-related sponsorship or known as philanthropy (Shimp, 2010), is defined by the drive to undertake action to contribute towards a cause (Shimp, 2010). The subsection below explains the two sponsorship types.

#### 3.2.3.1. *Philanthropy*

Philanthropic sponsorship is the act of giving money to non-profit and charitable organizations without an expectation or return in mind (Mamo, 2015). In many instances, there is no direct relationship between the firm’s contributions and any impact that occurs on the sponsoring business (Settembre Blundo, Garcia Muina, Fernandez, Riccardi, & Maramotti Politi, 2017). Settembre Blundo *et al.*, (2017) note that philanthropic sponsorship is an important tool for marketing and communications and has seen dramatic increase in investment input. Lee (2015) argued that sponsoring a philanthropic cause gives brands an edge by increasing loyalty, and influences purchasing behaviour (Bortoleto & de Moura Costa, 2012; Lee, 2015).

Regardless of the motivation behind philanthropic sponsorship position, firms always stand to benefit because consumers are likely to patronise firms that embody social and ethical standards (Lee, 2015). Research by Settembre Blundo *et al.*, (2017) shows that consumers’ willingness to pay more significantly increases when buying products from socially responsible companies. Although cause-related sponsorship is done out of goodwill, Mamo (2015) argues that the bottom-line is still about making money.

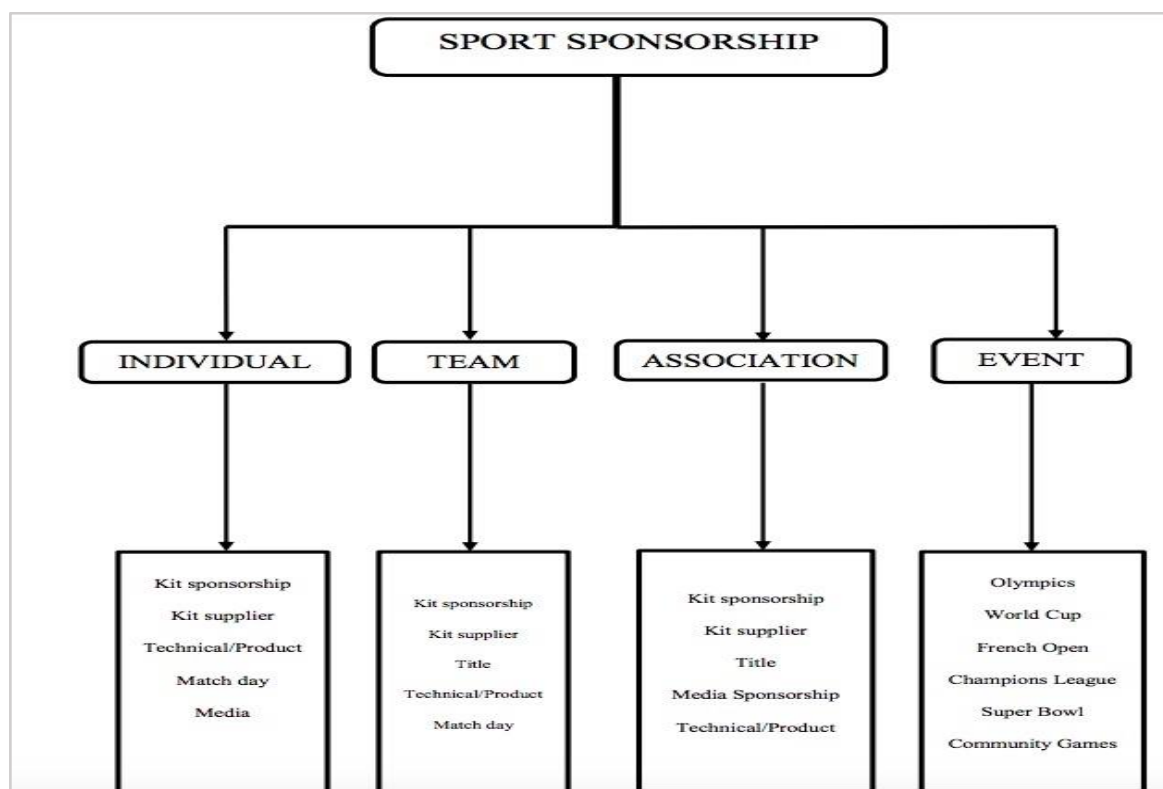
#### 3.2.3.2. *Commercial Sponsorship*

Sponsorship can also be used explicitly as a marketing toolkit, with explicit targets and return-on-investment objectives (Lee, 2015). There are different motivations for undertaking commercial sponsorship such as reach, corporate image, product-selling, guest hospitality, and sales as key motivations (Shimp, 2010). According to Clark *et al.*, (2001), firms are always searching and employing strategies to promote themselves and to get closer to their consumers. Meffert, Burmann and Kirchgeorg (2012) state that there are two important types of commercial sponsorship that have the ability to promote and deliver impact for firms, namely sport and media sponsorship. Meffert *et al.* (2012) recognize other types of commercial sponsorship such as cultural-sponsoring, social-sponsoring, and environmental-sponsoring. Whilst the latter are

also important, Meffert *et al.* (2012) recognize sport-sponsorship as ubiquitous. In line with the objectives, the study is focused on sport sponsorship with football as a device.

Soccer is arguably the biggest sporting code in the world, with the ability to unite diverse crowds and often brings the world to a “standstill” when big competitions and/or teams are playing (Bello, 2016). Tapping into this passion point, argue Fransen *et al.*, can deliver unbounded benefits for brands (Fransen *et al.*, 2013). Many brands opt to sponsor soccer competitions with the hope that association will aid in delivering impact on the brand (Fransen *et al.*, 2013; Shilbury *et al.*, 2014; Bello, 2016).

Sport sponsorship has certainly become ubiquitous for brands, it has become an unparalleled vehicle to get in touch with consumers (Levin, 2013). The trend is primarily driven by consumers’ high interest in sports, furthermore, there is also a general acceptance by brands that sponsorship enables positive image transfer (Levin, 2013). Zinger and O’Reilly (2010) presented the sport sponsorship classification model as a guide to understand how customers perceive sponsors. Figure 3.2 below illustrates this classification.



**Figure 3.2: Classification of Sports Sponsorship (Zinger & O'Reilly (2010))**



















Zinger and O'Reilly (2010) provide the above classification to outline the different properties that can be sponsored using sports. According to Shimp (2010), sponsoring a competitive sports property increases the chance of building up a connection between the sponsor brand and the property. As a result, sponsor brands can borrow the property's equity (Shimp, 2010). Zinger and O'Reilly (2010) give a detailed account on the above properties, but for the purposes of this study, tournament sponsorship will be the focus because of its relevance. Sponsoring a competitive sports tournament increases the chance to build a connection between the sponsor and the event (Zinger & O'Reilly, 2010). The main sponsors of an event own and enjoy the rights for advertising pre, during and post the event (Jakobs, 2009). The following sub-section assesses the fit between soccer and sponsorship, and the key motivations.

#### 3.2.4. Soccer Sponsorship Fit

Research by Woisetschlager, Eiting, Haselhoff and Michaelis (2009) state that sponsorship fit is typically driven by perception from consumers, the fans, and the sponsor brands. Woisetschlager *et al.*, (2009) found that if a sponsorship relationship has a positive perception, then the sponsorship delivered positively in terms of brand equity, purchase intentions. Their conclusion is unison with Roy and Cornwell's definition of sponsorship fit. According to Roy and Cornwell (2003: 187), it is "*the perceived matching of attributes between the sponsoring brand and the sponsored objects*". Roy and Cornwell state that sponsorship fit is about striking cognitive balance between the brand's sponsorship objectives and the consumer tensions through the sponsored property (Roy & Cornwell, 2003).

According to Woisetschlager *et al.*, (2009), of the limited research that exists in sponsorship congruency, the most spoken about determinants are functional and image similarities. This means there must be a match between the functional fundamentals of the sponsor brand and the sponsored property as well as an image fit, what they term the "*fit in general sense*" (Woisetschlager *et al.*, 2009: 170). The research also states that higher fit is related to higher sponsor recall or recognition and high sponsored property awareness (Cornwell *et al.* 2005). This means if the sponsored property has exceedingly high levels of recall, the sponsoring brand will leverage off the awareness of the property. Smith (2010) argues that many brands

that sponsor soccer seek to penetrate the uncommon spaces they would otherwise be unable to access by leveraging the high levels of awareness soccer enjoy. In this instance, soccer serves as a vehicle to get the brand through to enclosed spaces (Olson & Thjomoe, 2011). The association between the sponsored property and sponsor brand plays a significant role in fit, it contributes to congruency (Olson & Thjomoe, 2011). Olson and Thjomoe (2011) also identify the frequency to be a biggest attribute in determinant in sponsorship fit. For example, the ABSA Premier Soccer League in South Africa has well over 400 games in a season, this excludes competitions (PSL, 2018). Sponsor brands benefit from the large followership that soccer enjoys. Figure 3.3 shows an itemised stadium attendance for the PSL 2017/18 season.

#	Stadium	Capacity	Spectators	Average
1	 <b>FNB-Stadium</b> Kaizer Chiefs	94.700	281.649	18.777
2	 <b>Orlando Stadium</b> Orlando Pirates	40.000	166.210	11.872
3	 <b>Dr Petrus Molemela Stadium</b> Bloemfontein Celtic	20.000	163.500	10.900
4	 <b>Loftus Versfeld Stadium</b> Mamelodi Sundowns FC	51.762	121.000	8.067
5	 <b>Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium</b> Chippa United	48.459	117.223	7.815
6	 <b>Harry Gwala Stadium</b> Maritzburg United FC	12.000	114.600	7.640
7	 <b>Cape Town Stadium</b> Cape Town City FC	55.000	99.150	6.610
8	 <b>Cape Town Stadium</b> Ajax Cape Town	55.000	91.060	6.071
9	 <b>King Zwelithini Stadium</b> AmaZulu FC	10.000	77.366	5.158
10	 <b>Peter Mokaba Stadion</b> Polokwane City FC	41.733	71.492	4.766
11	 <b>Peter Mokaba Stadion</b> Baroka FC	41.733	69.024	4.602
12	 <b>Lucas Masterpieces Moripe Stadium</b> SuperSport United	29.000	67.692	4.513
13	 <b>Goble Park</b> Free State Stars	20.000	55.300	3.687
14	 <b>Royal Bafokeng Stadium</b> Cape Umoya United FC	42.000	38.405	2.560
15	 <b>Bidvest Stadium</b> Bidvest Wits FC	15.000	37.274	2.485
16	 <b>Princess Magogo Stadium</b> Lamontville Golden Arrows	12.000	35.415	2.361
<b>Total:</b>		<b>588.387</b>	<b>1.606.360</b>	<b>6.721</b>

**Figure 3.3: 2017/18 ABSA PSL Stadium Ave. Attendance (ABSA PSL, 2018)**

Lastly, Roy and Cornwell (2004) state that because soccer is a high equity property and enjoys high levels of media presence and expenditure, brands that sponsor soccer can utilize the media presence. To conclude, the drive behind sponsorship of soccer is derived from the attention that soccer enjoys, across different consumer profiles, the recognition of the sport and its relatability (Olson & Thjomoe, 2011). Smith (2010) also states that as a big passion point, brands can piggy bag off the emotions that soccer elicits on consumers. Smith further states that soccer carries relevance in terms of product thus makes the association easier (Smith, 2010).

Pursuing a sponsorship is strongly based on the sponsor brand's assessment of the fit between the brand and the sponsored property (Zinger & O'Reilly, 2010). Clark *et al.* (2009) state that sponsorship is an expensive tool and has been set remarkably high standards in terms of return on investment. The biggest pressure is on title sponsors to deliver effectively on the brand (Clark *et al.*, 2009).

#### 3.2.5. Title Sponsorship

Clark *et al.* (2009) make a distinction between title sponsorship and affiliate sponsorship. Title sponsorship is distinguished by its premium price tag and the exclusivity that the title sponsor gets, state Clark *et al.*, (2009). When a sponsor does not have title sponsor status, they are likely to share the spoils with other brands, the competition for share of voice and the benefits thereof will be proportional to the price paid to associate with the event (Clark *et al.*, 2009).

Title sponsorship is considered the crown jewel of sports sponsorship because it garners top media coverage and is prized for both generating brand or product awareness and building an image for sponsors (Clark *et al.*, 2009). Not surprisingly, the rising cost of title sponsorships has led some brands and companies to question their underlying value. Interestingly, little attention has been paid to understanding title sponsorship in literature. According to Clark *et al.*, (2009), to date, no study has considered the strategic success of title sponsorship, a seemingly expensive activity. Kudo (2010) also support the assertion that research focusing on title sponsorship is not well developed and as such, title sponsorship definitions have been anecdotal evidences gathered from sponsorship related articles and resources (Kudo, 2010).

Based on the definition of sponsorship, which is said to be the acquisition of rights to affiliate or to associate with a product or event with the purpose of deriving benefits related to the association (Clark *et al.*, 2009; O'Hagan, 2010), title sponsorship is thus defined as the acquisition of rights to take part in the official name of the event for the purposes of deriving benefits related to the name sharing (Kudo, 2010).

According to Clark *et al.*, (2009), brands may seek title sponsorship for one reason, deriving benefits from name sharing. Clark *et al.* (2012) note that there are not many differences in the objectives advanced by corporates for naming rights and those seeking affiliation (Clark *et al.*, 2009). Both sponsors, whether title or affiliate sponsor seek to utilize their right to maximize brand awareness and seek strong brand associations through repeated pairings (Kudo, 2010). Roy and Cornwell (1999) identified six objectives that brands claimed to pursue through title sponsorship namely: image enhancement, less cluttered communications, awareness, brand positioning, part of an integrated marketing communications plan, and direct on-site sales (Roy & Cornwell, 1999).

From the research by Salo (2011), it is evident that companies and brands have adopted sports sponsorship as a strategic asset for a variety of reasons, but the most common backbone to this decision is bringing their brands closer to consumers. The sub-section below briefly discusses sponsorship of short-term tournaments as they are central.

### 3.2.6. Soccer Tournaments

Little research has been conducted to understand the impact or lack thereof that derives from the duration of activity (Cornwell *et al.*, 2012). Duration in the case of sports longevity means the number of hours, days, weeks or even months that a sporting competition takes to conclude, from start to finish (Klusemann, et al., 2013). Below is a discussion of the differences between a regular season and a short-term tournament (Lanclos, 2017).

#### 3.2.6.1. *Season-Long Soccer Tournament*

A regular season is a long term, continual tournament characterized by divisional hierarchies and a team's position in the "log" (Lanclos, 2017). Teams that compete in a league can be promoted or relegated in between leagues, depending on their finishing positions at the end of a season (Lanclos, 2017). A season is a duration that is predefined by the soccer governing body (Klusemann *et al.*, 2013). In South Africa, the South African Football Association (SAFA) is responsible for this determination. The Premier Soccer League (PSL) is the highest professional division and teams compete to play or stay in the PSL. Teams that play lower leagues behind the PSL in the National First Division (NFD), the ABC Motsepe League, and the SAFA Regional League all compete to play in the highest league (PSL, 2017). A regular season is also referred to as a "domestic" football league.

Most sporting countries around the world have soccer leagues in a domestic season, comprising of several tiered divisions in which teams accumulate points throughout the season depending on the results (Lanclos, 2017). At the end of a season, a champion is declared based on the highest number of points accumulated, the teams with the least points are relegated to lower divisions and the teams from lower divisions with the most points are promoted to higher divisions (Lanclos, 2017). During a regular season, a series of games can be played as a separate competition to decide on a winner, these are known as short-term tournaments (Byl, 2014).

#### 3.2.6.2. *Short-Term Soccer Tournaments*

A short-term tournament is a series of contests between competitors challenging each other for an overall prize (Byl, 2014). The contests or games are played over a short period of time and there is a specified criterion for inclusion, advancement and elimination, (Byl, 2014). Tournaments are different from a regular season because, they are played at over a short period, parallel to the regular season or pre-season (Lanclos, 2017). In a tournament, contestants play to advance through the tournament stages and get closer to the prize, and losers are eliminated, or their chances of winning get slim (Byl, 2014). There are several formats of short-term tournaments, namely: single elimination, double elimination, multilevel, round robin, round-robin double split, round-robin triple, round-robin quadruple split (Byl, 2014). The tournament in the PSL are single elimination and double elimination.

#### 3.2.6.3. *Implications for Sponsoring a Short-term Tournament*

Firms sponsoring short-term tournaments are constantly encountered with the challenge of reinventing and intensifying their sponsorship supporting activities to keep consumers interested and engaged (Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). Firms also need to keep in mind that introducing breaks in the provision of sponsorship experiences may cause retrospective judgements based on a combination of prior peaks and the intensity experienced (Fredrecksen & Kahneman, 1993; cited in Nelson & Meyvis, 2008).

Furthermore, short-term tournament sponsors have the leverage and the license to constantly reinvent and assess their sponsorship activities to ensure they do not reintroduce experiences that advance negative consumption experiences (Ariely & Lowenstein, 2000; Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). Short-term tournament sponsors need to constantly evaluate their activities to ensure alignment with consumers' experience expectations, failure to do may result in future activities that have absolutely no bearing in the mind of the consumer (Ariely & Zauberman, 2008). The knowledge or insight into what consumers think helps sponsor brands to adapt their activities for continued intensified experiences to positively impact what resides in the mind of the consumer or the goodwill as stated (Speed & Thompson, 2000).

### 3.3. BRAND EXPERIENCES

Fortezza and Pencarelli (2011) study on experiences marketing concluded that consumers are increasingly searching for meaning, happiness, sensations and fulfilment of their core values through market offerings. Consumers now seemingly have an expectation that firms will provide or will support an experience that elicits a sensation and a response, (Same & Larimo, 2015). Schmitt (2010) defines this evolution as the experience economy, engulfed by experience marketing, where businesses use brand experiences to connect with consumers and to differentiate in the marketplace.

#### 3.3.1. Experiential Marketing

Schmitt (2010) states that experience marketing is the exciting kid on the block, it is based on understanding how consumers experience a brand and in turn providing appealing experiences for consumers to be differentiated in the competitive

marketplace. By definition, experience marketing is providing an encounter that consumers personally interact with either as an observer or participant (Schmitt, 2010). The experiences derived illicit intense emotions or stimulate responses in consumers (Schmitt, 2010). Same and Larimo (2015) add that experiential marketing is a tactical tool that helps brands to execute their marketing efforts experientially.

According to Schmitt (2011), what a company does in the marketplace will influence consumers' attitudes towards that firm. Consumers' reactions are based on the strategic experiential modules that firms need to be cautious of whenever crafting any collateral in the marketing toolkit (Schmitt, 2010). The strategic experiential modules (SEMs) play a significant role in the perceptual mapping of brands and products argued Bijmolt and van de Velden (2012). The SEMs that Bijmolt and van de Velden (2012) reference are: "Sense", "Feel", "Think", "Act", and "Relate". Brakus *et al.* (2009) argue that when consumers search for products, when they shop and when they receive service; they are unconsciously on the lookout for these modules. Brakus *et al.* (2009) add that brand experiences impact satisfaction and ultimately, loyalty, a tenet of CBBE.

### 3.3.2. Brand Experiences

According to Brakus *et al.* (2009) brand experiences are tactics that boost the effectiveness of a firm's marketing, especially the effectiveness of sponsorships (Same & Larimo, 2015). Brand experience is about staging of events in such a way that memorable experiences are created for the consumer (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Fransen *et al.*, 2011). Schmitt (2010) stated that experiences are staged, meaning the sponsoring firm needs to initiate, create, and develop an experience rather than the experiences brought by the sponsored property itself. Fransen *et al.* (2011) added that an experience should always have direct contact and participation between the brand, the sponsored tournament and the customer.

Brand experiences that are highly involving in nature are likely to impact consumers' perceptions (Coppetti, 2009, as cited in Brakus *et al.*, 2009). In addition, consumers who actively participate in a sponsorship are likely to have favourable brand attitudes and are prone to have an increased image transfer from the sponsored event to the

sponsor firm (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Participant involvement heightens a rich sensory experience, further illustrating how constructed experiences can be instructive, pleasing, entertaining and most importantly, impactful (Fortezza & Pencarelli, 2011). Fransen *et al.* (2013) add that brand experiences enhance top of mind awareness, recall and positively impact attitudes. They argue that this is because of continued brand engagement and interaction, which helps in remembering and easily linking the event to the firm (Fransen *et al.*, 2013). The researchers argued that providing experiences that resonate with consumers' hedonic needs results in desired imagery (Fransen *et al.*, 2013). Fortezza and Pencarelli (2011) concluded by stating that when designing an experience, it is important to focus on social rather than individual aspects of the experience. They argue that social contact provides expanded excitement and appeals to social needs and ensures that consumers interact with one another through the experience (Fortezza & Pencarelli, 2011).

### 3.3.3. Consumer Experiences in Soccer Sponsorship

Many firms have attempted to utilise sponsorship to deliver experiences with varying levels of success (Schmitt, 2010). Lanclos (2017) pointed to two case studies where firms have been successful in using sponsorship to deliver experiences for consumers. The case of Heineken through the sponsorship of the UEFA Champions League (UCL), the company does activations around the world pre and during the Champions League tournament (Lanclos, 2017). They complement these activations with product packaging and embedded messages designed specifically for the UCL. Another firm that has successfully utilised sponsorship of the UCL is Lays (Lanclos, 2017). Lays also has special packaging during the tournament, by running competitions and utilising the product packaging as an interaction device. Lanclos (2017) argues that this not only increases sales but direct consumer actions.

Lanclos (2017) argued that these brands have been successful in delivering compelling experiences because they integrate rationality, emotions, humanism (interactions) and mechanics (environmental design) in their experience activities. Huang (2017) stated that that customers are constantly seeking, consciously and unconsciously for experiences that deliver on these attributes. Schmitt (2010) and Meenaghan (2013) also asserted that sponsorship is one of the most suited methodologies to deliver holistic experiences. Below are key considerations that



sponsors need to be cognisant of in their brand experiences during short-term tournaments

#### *3.3.3.1. Consumer Experience Recall*

Schmitt (2010) argued that it is through sponsorship that brands are experienced and differentiated. Ariely and Loewenstein (2009) concluded that consumers summarize and evaluate their experiences in memory, these memories are not the entire sequence of events, but only impactful extracts that stick in their minds. These extracts, argued Schmitt (2010), have certain defining characteristics or gestalt features. Gestaltism is defined as the ability, by individuals, to acquire and maintain meaningful perceptions or traits of an event or experience and sum those traits into defining the event as a whole (Salo, 2011).

Schmitt (2010) added that individuals choose experiences that provide the most pleasure, and they care about the improvements that are effected on these experiences over time (Mamo, 2015). Schmitt (2010) also notes that over time, consumers will switch away from a favourite experience even if they get less pleasure from the switch. This behaviour is driven by the need to acquire different experiences to build varied memories, avoiding more of the same (Schmitt, 2010). Given the accumulation of these experiences, it is important to examine the rate of consumption at which consumers want to be exposed to these experiences. Nelson and Meyvis (2008) posit that continuity of tournaments plays a role in the enjoyment of experiences. The sub-section below details research that has been done to gauge consumers' expectations about the desirability of breaks or interruptions in their experiences.

#### *3.3.3.2. Interrupted vs Continuous Experiences*

According to Nelson and Meyvis (2008) consumers choose breaks in negative experiences and avoid breaks in positive experiences. They state that breaks fuel negative experiences or tend to improve positive experiences (Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). Nelson and Meyvis (2008) point out that brands need to reinvent within their long-term activities to bolster and sustain the excitement that derives from this experience (Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). Equally so, firms that do interrupted or short-term experiences have equal pressure to continuously reinvent their activities for optimized experiences during the short periods of consumption (Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). Ariely

and Loewenstein (2009) in their study of duration in decision making and judgement concluded that stimuli has a significant impact on rating of duration. They concluded that the nature of the stimulus being evaluated or experienced plays a role in the reception or rejection of duration.

According to Nelson and Meyvis (2008), consumers look forward to experiences, especially the ones they enjoy, if firms decide to provide short-term experiences then they are under pressure to devise experiences that are impactful. The literature shows that sponsorship can certainly be used as a vehicle to deliver experiences (Schmitt, 2010), although the literature does not provide additional evidence in terms of short-term tournaments (Byl, 204), it does stand to suggest sport sponsorship delivers maximum impact (Kudo, 2016).

It is evident that sport sponsorship serves as a vehicle to deliver customer-oriented experiences rather than convey the functional benefits of products (Tsiotsou, 2012), the duration of the experiences remains an area of further research. Mazodier and Merunka (2012) posit that sponsorship that has facets of emotional elicitation and pragmatic experiences can potentially alter what is known of a brand regardless of the duration of exposure. Even with short durations, compelling experiences can still deliver a great deal in terms of impact for brands (Eddy & Cork, 2018). The following section introduces customer-based brand equity and thereafter the relationship with sponsorship and brand experiences.

### 3.4. CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY

This section introduces the customer-based brand equity model as theorised by Aaker (1996) and later extended by Keller (2001). The importance of sponsorship in building CBBE for sponsor firms is discussed, followed by an expansion of the CBBE tenets and how firms can channel brand experiences to positively impact what consumers learn, see, hear, and think. The last sub-section discusses the importance of integrating experiences in sponsorship to build equity.

#### 3.4.1. Brand Equity

To fully grasp the notion of Customer-Based Brand Equity, Brand Equity must be probed first. Brand equity is a concept born in the 1980s, driven by the interest from

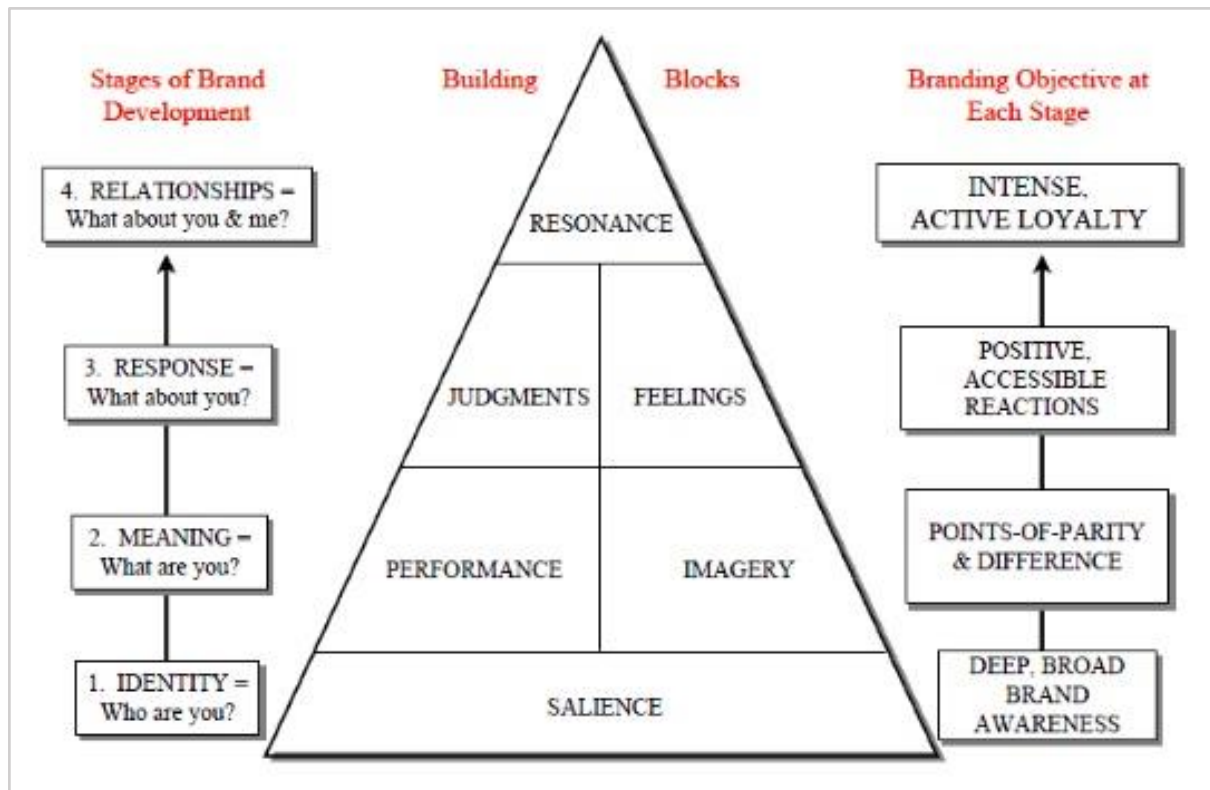
businesses to define measure and understand the antecedents and consequences of building strong brands (Tsordia, Papadimitriou, & Apostolopoulou, 2018). Brand equity is used to denote the added value of a brand over and above its products (Aaker & Biel, 2009). The main recipients of this value are consumers and firms.

#### 3.4.1.1. *Brand Equity in Sports*

Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) have played a significant role in the development of brand equity, both in academia and in practice. Both their works advance the concept of brand equity to analyse how a brand could add value to a product or service (Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2014). Mullin *et al.* (2014) argues that brand equity represents the outcome of effective marketing strategies adopted for a branded product compared to strategies adopted for the same products but without any branding. Christodoulides, Cadogan and Veloutsou (2013) state that brand equity is the integration of tangible and intangible assets that reflect the value of a brand across different stakeholders, the firm and consumers. Christodoulides *et al.* (2013) add that brand equity is a platform upon which firms can build competitive advantage, secure future cash flow and grow shareholder wealth (Christodoulides *et al.*, 2013). From the tangible and intangible assets, consumers make their judgements which results in CBBE (Mazodier & Merunka, 2012; Keller, 2013).

#### 3.4.2. Customer-Based Brand Equity Model

Customer-based brand equity is the commercial value that can be derived by a firm, based on what lies in the mind of the consumer (Keller, 2013). CBBE lies in what a customer has learned, feels towards a brand, what they have seen and heard of a brand over time (Keller, 2016). CBBE is based on perceptions but influenced by experiences encountered through products, services, and accompanying marketing collateral (Stahl *et al.*, 2012). Keller (2013) argues that for brands to build strong equity and own perceptions; they must consolidate their products or services together with their marketing efforts such that consumers' thoughts, feelings, images, beliefs, perceptions and opinions become intrinsically linked to the brand. Keller (2009) devised the customer-based equity model to provide a structural approach into building a strong brand, comprising of the following levers that make up the customer-based equity model pyramid.



**Figure 3.4: Theoretical Model of CBBE (Keller, 2009)**

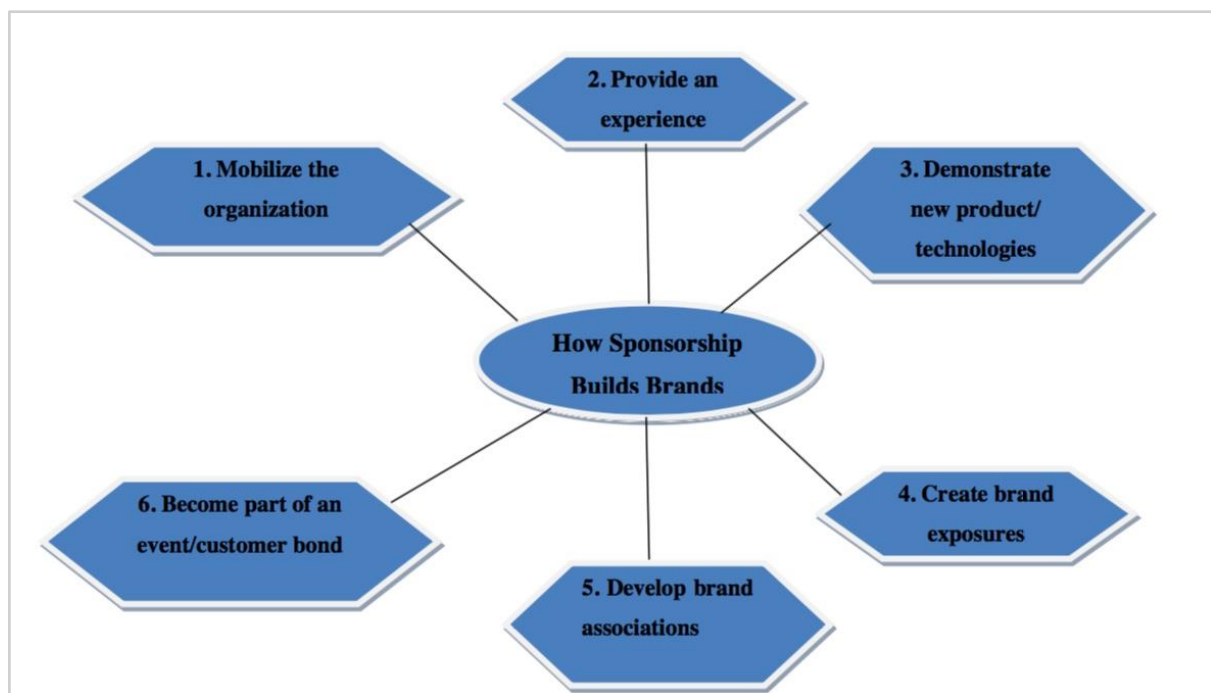
Figure 3.4 above by Keller (2009) views brand building as a staggered exercise, ranging from bottom to top. Step 1 entails identification of the brand and the associations linked to the brand in customers' minds when they think of a certain product or a need (Keller, 2009). Step 2 of the model details how firms need to firmly establish the meaning of the brand in the minds of consumers by strategically linking tangible and intangible brand associations (Keller, 2009). In step 3, Keller (2009) states that firms need to elicit the correct customer responses in terms of brand related judgements and feelings, which translate to intense, active loyalty between the brand and customers in step 4 (Keller, 2009).

The theoretical model of CBBE enacts the layered steps as means to establishing the brand building blocks; salience, imagery, performance, judgements, feelings, and resonance (Keller, 2013). To create CBBE, brands are required to reach the top of the pyramid and impact resonance (Keller, 2013). Firms need to create a foundation in which they can build strong brand resonance as the pinnacle of customer-based brand equity. To achieve this, firms need to follow the step by step outline based on identity,

meaning, responses and loyalty as a blueprint (Keller, 2013). The sub-section below discusses creating resonance through sponsorship.

### 3.4.3. Creating Resonance through Soccer Sponsorships

The power of interactive marketing is undeniably an instrumental tool to brand building and has potential to impact every aspect of customer-based brand equity (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014). Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) argued that sponsorship offers a unique advantage in brand building because it lends itself to becoming a part of people's lives. They argue that sponsorship is both the process and the outcome of concerted brand building experiences that generates synergy amongst all variables involved (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Figure 3.5 below highlights the existing methodological approach used to build brands through sponsorship. The framework does not fully integrate the tenets of CBBE thus it is used for reference purposes.



**Figure 3.5: Brand Building Through Sponsorship (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000)**

#### 3.4.3.1. Identity

Brand experiences have the potential to impact and improve both the breadth and the depth of brand awareness (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014). This is because through brand experiences, a sponsor brand can target specific groups at specific events (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011). The focus should be on creating experiences that deliver

strong brand awareness specifically for the market segment being targeted (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014). Brands need to illuminate all their brand cues during these experiences, from the brand name, brand logo, colours and all other collateral that will stick in the minds of consumers (Amoako *et al.*, 2012).

#### 3.4.3.2. *Meaning*

Brand experiences help to devise and establish performance and imagery points-of-parity against competitors, argued Donlan and Crowther (2014). At sponsored properties, brands can provide much details about their brands and have an opportunity to provide supporting reasons-to-believe the advertised claims (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014). Through experiences, firms can covertly draw comparisons between their brands and those of competitors in terms of performance, designs, pricing etcetera (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Most importantly, experiences are an opportunity for firms to convey their histories, heritages and experiences, all which are key dimensions of imagery (Eddy & Cork, 2018). The way a firm communicates will define and establish the brand's personality through the tone and creative content (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014).

#### 3.4.3.3. *Responses*

Brand experiences provide an opportunity for firms to encourage attitudinal formation and decision making (Herrmann *et al.*, 2016) and these in turn influence how consumers feel towards a brand and how they pass a judgement (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Experiences work best to supplement other channels that seek to populate consumer responses as they provide an engagement platform at a personal level (Kakati & Choudhury, 2013). Brands can reinforce the brand through experiences in terms of quality, credibility, considerations and superiority, which is argued as instrumental in changing consumers' feelings (Kakati & Choudhury, 2013).

#### 3.4.3.4. *Relationships*

Brand experiences permit the creation of resonance because consumers get to encounter and interact with the brand (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014). These interactions help strengthen brand attachment, help build a community among consumers, and between the consumers and the brand (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014). Active engagement in brand experiences is the most crucial element in brand building because it allows

consumers to interact, learn and teach each other about a brand (Alexandris & Tsiotsou, 2012). Experiences also help consumers express their commitment where testimonials are key (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011). It is also an opportunity for consumers to observe the loyalty of other consumers and consequently make the decision to commit to a brand (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014).

Donlan and Crowther (2014) concluded that sponsorship of soccer has potential to positively impact consumers' relationships with sponsor brands. They argued that during tournaments, the direct experiences provided can intensify consumers' brand contact. The researchers noted that the strength of experiences plays a significant role in delivering brand impact.

#### 3.4.4. Sponsor Experiences' Impact on CBBE

Existing literature on sponsorship impact on brand has focused solely on brand equity at an overarching level (Tsordia *et al.*, 2018). The studies have also consistently concluded that sponsorship has the ability and leverage to impact awareness and imagery (Saran & Gogula, 2016). The current study employs majority of evidence from brand equity to support sponsorship impact brand. Most evidence seeks to suggest that sponsorship has been able to impact awareness and image (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014). Brand awareness is the most obvious impact attribute because of the above the line brand presence that happens during the sponsored tournament or games (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Brand experiences also contribute immensely during tournaments towards building a strong top of mind presence (Schmitt, 2010). Experiences have also been proven to attract new customers who may not be followers or fans of soccer activities (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014).

The above evidence stands to suggest that soccer sponsorship has been able to broaden the spectator base of soccer, whilst enlarging the pool of consumers exposed to the brand (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011). Bodet & Bernache-Assollant (2011) found that growth in spectator numbers was fuelled by the increased awareness in terms of the brand experiences at the match. They add that consumers were aesthetic fans pulled by the call-out of the experiences at the games, cementing the importance of experiences in luring consumers (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011).

In terms of associations, Bodet and Chavanat (2014) argued that consumers were able to flesh out new associations with brands following an experience encounter. The associations are in accordance with the differences in terms of brand experiences lived against the staged experiences at soccer matches. This finding advances the argument that experiences need to be complimented by other facets of the brand to ensure experiences are long lasting (Bodet & Chavanat, 2014). Saran and Gogula (2016) indicated that for casual spectators, the positive imagery can be short-lived, mainly because consumers are in the crux of the moment and the brand is seen as fun and entertaining. There is little evidence to suggest that this kind of imagery can be sustained beyond the experience period.

Lastly, in terms of loyalty, existing research has offered very thin evidence to suggest a positive conspicuous impact driven by sponsorship. Cornwell *et al.* (2003) note that there is room to investigate and probe the relationship. Guschwan's research suggested that loyalty is a fickle undertaking and is certainly not changed by the "*unanimous appreciation of the fireworks at the end of the game*" (Guschwan, 2012: p. 25). The most concrete finding in terms of loyalty is captured by Guschwan (2012) conclusion that consumers are not likely to suddenly change purchase intentions, behaviour, and brand commitment based on a day's experience. Guschwan (2012) argues that the link between the consumer and their resonance with a brand spans beyond a day's worth of activities, it is a combination of the brand facets at every point where the consumer had a need and the brand came through for them.

### 3.5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, sponsorship has certainly become an instrumental factor in brand building. It is seen as a vehicle to connect with consumers through sports, an uncontested passion point. If done right, sponsorship has many advantages for brands, it helps brands get closer to consumers. It gives and strengthens a brand's competitive advantage, and most importantly, has potential to build customer-based brand equity. To create strong relationships as the pinnacle of CBBE, brands need to first create a foundation on which they can build resonance. Brands need to follow the step by step outline based on identity, meaning, responses and loyalty. Literature has shown research has been done on the topic of sponsorship impact on brand, but it has

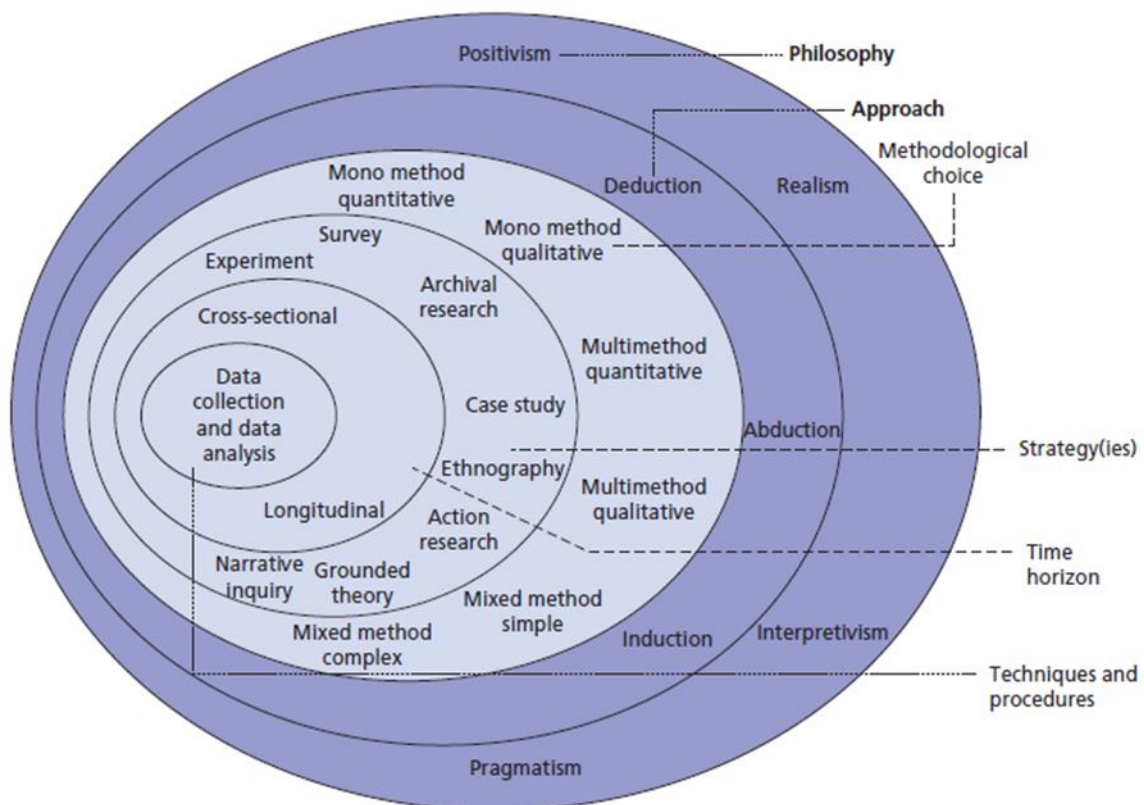


focused on brand equity at an overarching level. The studies have consistently concluded that sponsorship has the ability and leverage to impact awareness and imagery. As shown in the above literature, the concepts; sponsorship, brand experiences and CBBE have been studied in isolation, therefore no theoretical framework exists to explain the relationship holistically. In the next chapter, the research methodology for this study is explained in detail.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research design and the methodological approach used in the study to understand how sponsor brands utilise brand experiences in their sponsored short-term tournaments to build strong and lasting relationships. The chapter introduces the research philosophy, discussing the most suited paradigm for this study; the design; research method; sampling strategy, data collection and data analysis approaches employed to achieve the study objectives. To conclude, the chapter discusses the validity and the reliability of the research instrument, ethical considerations, and noted limitations. The discussion in this chapter is guided by the research onion depicted in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1. Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012)**

### 4.2. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

A research philosophy is a set of beliefs, standards, and assumptions that provide guidance for conducting research (Tracy, 2013). The research philosophy refers to

what a researcher needs to do when embarking on research, or when developing knowledge in a field (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). A philosophy is used by researchers to guide research design, strategy, research instrument, and sampling (Malhotra, 2010). There are three ways of thinking about research philosophy, namely: ontology, epistemology and axiology (Doody & Nooman, 2013). Each of these considerations have significant differences that impact research procedures (Tracy, 2013). The following classifications are crucial in selecting the suited philosophical approach.

Ontology is classified as the concern with the nature of reality, it seeks to understand things that exist (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). In comparison, epistemology is concerned with what constitutes acceptable knowledge is a field of study, whilst axiology studies judgements about value (Saunders *et al.*, 2012; Doody & Nooman, 2013). This study intends on uncovering facts from objective views of different brand custodians regarding the impact of experiences on their brands, this makes the epistemological approach the most suitable based on its classification.

Epistemology itself has three philosophical positions that it assumes: positivism, realism, and interpretivism (Tracy, 2013). Positivism refers to the study or investigation of social reality to the degree of “law-like generalisation”, such outcomes are produced in the physical or natural sciences (Malhotra, 2010). Realism is another branch in epistemology, it pertains to uncovering the truth of reality and the existence of objects that are ubiquitous independently in the human mind (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). The last branch in the epistemology philosophy is interpretivism. The interpretivism position focuses on the assessment of differences between humans as social actors, interpretivism emphasises on interpreting social roles contextually and in accordance with respective sets of meanings (Thahn & Thahn, 2015). To satisfy the guiding question of this study, this branch of positivism is therefore the best suited as the study seeks to investigate the drivers for each individual brand, considering their different contexts.

According to Thahn and Thahn (2015), the interpretivism approach in research allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and the experiences of the participants. A researcher who uses the interpretivist approach uses the experiences of their study subjects to construct and interpret the outputs from the data (Saunders

*et al.*, 2012). Creswell (2003) states that interpretivists depend heavily on the respondent's views of the circumstances being studied.

Carson, Gilmore, Perry, and Gronhaug (2001), stated that interpretivism does not use structural frameworks but adopts a flexible and personable structure receptive to capturing meanings embedded in human interactions and decodes what is perceived as reality. Interpretivist researchers enter into research with an idea and prior insights of the context to be studied but assume that it is insufficient in developing a fixed research design due to the complexity and the unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality (Carson *et al.*, 2001).

Interpretivism acknowledges that there is no single external reality, that nature is not confined to a structure but is fluid and varies from circumstance to circumstance (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This is true for this study as the participating firms all have different realities thus it is important to actively collaborate with them to get their unique perspectives. Importantly, interpretivism is not preceded by theory. Interpretivism develops theory or "patterns of meaning" during the research process (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006). The affirmation by MacKenzie and Knipe (2006) is important because it provides the researcher with the opportunity to investigate outside confines of theory. The paradigm is important because of the lack of a pre-existing theoretical framework that embodies all the variables of this study.

From the review of the research question, the probe of the existing literature and the contextual understanding of the philosophical approaches provided above, it is evident that the interpretivist approach was ideal for this study. The interpretivist approach was chosen to get first-hand insights from brand custodians on the decisions they make on sponsorship of tournaments and the kind brand experiences they discharge.

#### 4.3. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is defined as a coherent structure that outlines different research methods and components during data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (2005) adds that the design is characterised by what is going on, otherwise called ontology, how well scientists know something,

known as epistemology and how to go about to finding it out, the methodology (Lincoln & Guba, 2005).

The commonly used research designs include: causal-comparative used to determine the cause and effect between variables; correlational is used to establish relationships between two variables; explanatory design is used to identify links between variables, whereas descriptive is used to describe characteristics of the population under study (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2015). In both qualitative and quantitative research, exploratory is widely preferred because of its flexible structure especially when addressing research questions that have high levels of uncertainty, or when the subject matter being investigated is not well explored (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2015). Based on the overview of the various research designs, exploratory research is the most applicable for this study.

The relationship being explored in this study is an underserved area of research with respect to CBBE, sponsorship, and brand experiences, thus the it is not well understood. As a result, an exploratory research is most suited to uncover the dynamics of the relationship ((Ngulube & Ngulube, 2015). The flexibility of exploratory research was ideal in threading together the various components of the research in terms of collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data (Malhotra, 2010). The study was contextualised within PSL as the highest professional soccer league, with the highest number of short-term sponsors whose motivation drivers had previously not been explored.

In addition, the intersection of all three variables is underserved and as a result warranted in-depth exploration. To get meaningful and untainted insights into brand drivers, the research was conducted in the natural setting of the various sponsor brands (Creswell, 2014). Overall, the exploratory research design lens was the most suited approach to uncovering the relationship in this study as it has little attention to date. The following section discusses the methodology that arose because of the exploratory design employed in the study.

#### 4.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Malhotra (2010) defines methodology as a systematic plan for conducting research. It is a blueprint detailing the techniques used to achieve the study objectives and a broad consensus in which the data for the study is gathered and the way the empiricism of the study is outlined (Taylor, Bogdan & De Vault, 2015). Taylor *et al.*, (2015) define research methodology as a systematic process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data to increase understanding of a phenomena.

##### 4.4.1. Quantitative Research Approach

Quantitative and qualitative are the most common approaches for conducting research (Tracy, 2013). Quantitative is an approach that is used to test, prove or disprove existing theories (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Quantitative research is common mainly in studies that require statistical or mathematical ways of representing findings whereas qualitative is used in studies that necessitate words for analysis (Taylor *et al.*, 2015). In quantitative research, the positivist paradigm is applicable as it is more concerned with the overarching worldview and not direct engagement with the population under study, thus the use of surveys, experiments, etc. (Doody & Nooman, 2013). When collecting data for quantitative research, there is little room to probe drivers; which are the why, what questions (Tracy, 2013). Qualitative research however is used to build or populate theory (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).

##### 4.4.2. Qualitative Research Approach

In this study, the focus was to build a new theory about the relationship that exists within the study variables, as such, the qualitative approach worked best. This decision was largely influenced by the research question under study and the study philosophy. The interpretivist philosophy seeks to explain real world phenomena through the eyes of study participants where the researcher uses the perceptions and experiences of participants to explain relationships (Thahn & Thahn, 2015). The direct engagement of study participants was crucial in populating new information for contained in the study.

Qualitative uses various techniques to solicit information from respondents such as face-to-face interviews, observation, field notes and document analysis (Tracy, 2013). For the study, in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with study participants

using a structured discussion guide to ask consistent questions across all respondents. Interviews were useful as they gave the respondents an opportunity to provide personal views and expressions, in their own words as an ideal strategy to uncover the motivations and drivers behind the relationship identified in this study (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Tracy, 2013).

The research question formulated at the beginning of the study also contributed to the selection of a qualitative approach due to its exploratory nature (Gill *et al.*, 2013; Creswell, 2014). The only way to uncover the reality of these brand decisions was a qualitative approach where respondents could convey their thoughts in relation to their brand's context. The following section explains the systematic approach that was used in the study to guide the different research milestones to ensure the study outcomes are of great quality.

For this research, direct engagement with each firm in their own context was important because it provided a holistic view and understanding of the brand's pursuit for customer-based brand equity. Researchers in the field, notably, Cornwell *et al.* (2001) state that brand equity is built over long periods, this assertion is contrary to the practice by these sponsor brands therefore leaving room to probe their decisions contextually. The relationship under study required the interpretation of motivations by brands to sponsor short-term tournaments and how they intend to build brand equity through discharge of brand experiences. The following section addresses why brand custodians were selected as the core sample for the qualitative inquiry.

#### 4.5. RESEARCH STRATEGY

A research strategy is defined as a series of steps or plan of action that gives and guides the researcher during a study, resulting in a systematic approach that produces high quality results and detailed reporting (Stangor, 2011). Common research strategies fall within the continuum of experiments, case studies, surveys, action research, ethnography, and grounded theory (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). When conducting research, various techniques can be undertaken to prove or disprove what is already known or make a new discovery (Creswell, 2014). Researchers can ask questions, use interviews, questionnaires, longitudinal and cross-sectional approaches to collect data (Bryman & Bell, 2010). In this study, the intent was to

generate new information thus there was a need to have an in-depth understanding of the subject matter through direct interaction with participants, therefore, a qualitative strategy was fitting.

With homage to the research question, qualitative interviews were chosen for the study, with emphasis on structured interviews. the reason for structured interviews was to maintain consistency across the different brands engaged for uniformity purposes (Tracy, 2013). Creswell (2013) states that qualitative interviews are the most widely used method for collecting data because they allow access to rich information. However, they require extensive planning with respect to the development of the structure, the selection of participants to interview, and how to analyse the information gathered (Creswell, 2014).

Several considerations were taken into account to enable the effectiveness of the qualitative interviews' strategy. These include the thematic structuring of the interview guide, which is discussed in detail in the upcoming sections, the target population discussed in the following section, as well as addressing nimble factors like duration, biases, interviewing skills which were all provisioned for during the design stage. The following section delves into the target population selected as part of the strategy to solicit useful information.

#### 4.6. TARGET POPULATION

According to Tracy (2013), a target population is a distinct group of people that is identified as the focus for a scientific query. Malhotra (2010) states that research is usually for the benefit of the population identified. Malhotra (2010) adds that because populations are large, a smaller portion representing the characteristics of the group must be identified and selected.

This study explores how sponsor firms use brand experiences in their sponsorship of short-term tournaments and how these experiences build customer-based brand equity. Therefore, the intended target population of the research is sponsor brands listed within the professional soccer tiers in South Africa. Cornwell *et al.* (2001) point out that sponsorship relationships are typically long-term but keeping in mind the research objective "*to determine if brand experiences impact customer-based brand*



*equity for brands who sponsor short-term soccer tournaments in terms of meaning, identity, responses and relationships*” the sample is thus limited to sponsor brands involved in short-term relationships. The sample from which the data was collected is discussed below.

#### 4.6.1. Sampling

According to Malhotra (2010) selecting the appropriate and suited sample is the most important activity in methodology. A suited sample ensures that the correct data is collected to answer the research question (Malhotra, 2010). The research design and research question were the crucial determinants of the sampling plan (Tracy, 2013). According to Tracy (2013), a sampling plan is the design that illustrates how the sources of data are chosen. The plan gives a view of the sampling approach and the sample size pursued.

#### 4.6.2. Sampling Frame

A sampling frame as argued by Malhotra, Briks and Wills (2012), is the representation of the target population. The frame for this study is an exhaustive list published by the PSL detailing all the sponsor brands that have sponsorship agreements with any property at the PSL level (PSL, 2017), the list is inclusive of tournament sponsors, team sponsors, athlete, and facilities sponsors.

### 4.7. SAMPLING STRATEGY

A sampling strategy is defined as the plan set forth by the researcher to ensure that the sample used in the study is representative of the population where the sample was extracted from (Creswell, 2013). There are two approaches to sampling, namely: probability and non-probability sampling (Malhotra, 2010; Creswell, 2013, 2014).

#### 4.7.1. Qualitative Research Approach

Non-probability sampling refers to a sampling technique that helps researchers to select representative units from a population that they are interested in studying (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2015). The units form a sample from which a researcher can make inferences about the wider population being studied (Malhotra, 2010). The core differentiator of non-probability sampling is that the sample or units to be studied are selected through subjective judgement by the researcher (Trotter, 2012).

In this study, non-probability sampling was chosen, informed by the research strategy. Trotter (2012) argues that non-probability sampling is useful in exploratory research where the intent is to establish a problem or to uncover new information thus the need to probe a niche target population familiar with the subject matter. In selecting the sample for the study, the judgemental or purposive non-probability sampling approach was utilized to ensure only the most suitable sample was selected based on the target population parameters that are informed by the research plan (Tracy, 2013).

The sample selected is an expert sample consisting of leaders of sponsor brands of short-term tournaments. The experts' designations ranged from Chief Marketing Officers, Head of Department, and Brand Director. This sample was the most appropriate as the chosen experts oversee the strategic intents of the respective brands thus, they are the key drivers or stakeholders of all strategic directions. The sample selected had a degree of bias based on the research plan, however to mitigate any further biases, the pre-set criteria was clear, and applied uniformly to all potential participants, bearing the limitation of the acceptable sponsor brands listed on the sample frame.

#### 4.7.2. Probability Sampling

Probability sampling is a sampling technique from which a sample is drawn from a larger population using methods based on probability theory (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2015). The core characteristic of probability sampling is the equal and known chance of selection and inclusion in a study (Creswell, 2014). Unlike non-probability sampling, probability sampling does not require the researcher to be highly involved in the selection of sample elements, instead, the researcher uses a lottery system, a computing program that generates unique random numbers (Creswell, 2014). Due to the limited population for the study, the probability sampling technique was not suited for this study. Overall, the research strategy was inherently qualitative due to its exploratory nature therefore more fitting to non-probability sampling. The following section is a discussion of how the data was collected from the sample selected using non-probability sampling.

#### 4.8. DATA COLLECTION

This section explores how the data was collected in this study. Tracy (2013) defines data collection as the process of collecting data from relevant sources for the purposes of finding answers to the research question. Gill *et al.* (2008) note that there are a variety of methods of data collection in qualitative research, including interviews, observations, visual and textual analysis. In line with the design of the study, in-depth interviews, done face-to-face with the target audience were used as the main method for collecting data.

Face-to-face interviews were selected because they play an important role in soliciting information that can be used to understand the thinking and motivations beyond observable results, as they help answer the why or how questions (Tracy, 2013). The interviews were particularly useful for this study as they allowed the researcher to probe the why questions behind the strategic motivations from brand custodians (Schultze & Avital, 2011). Doody and Nooman (2013) add that interviews help generate a contextual account of the respondents' lives, their experiences and their interpretations, this was particularly useful for this study to understand each brand given the distinct contexts. An interview discussion guide was used, containing predetermined and structured questions. The measurement instrument was assessed and approved by the UCT Commerce Faculty Ethics Research Committee and the School of Management Masters Committee. The following sub-section details the contents of the discussion guide used to engage the study participants.

##### 4.8.1. The interview Protocol

According to Tracy (2013), an interview protocol is an instrument of enquiry used to ask questions to gather specific information. A discussion guide was used in this study as an instrument of enquiry. An interview guide is a standardised script of questions to be asked during an interview or discussion (Tracy, 2013). The discussion guide is informed by the research question, the study objectives, the literature, and importantly, the research design. All these sources serve as a springboard to conducting interviews (Creswell, 2013). Ngulube and Ngulube (2015) state that an interview guides provide a framework of themes to be explored. Holloway and Wheeler (2013) also add that structured interviews are efficient such that they limit researcher bias and subjectivity because the topics of discussion are controlled. This makes it easy to code, analyse

and compare data from all participants (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013). It is important to note that exploration of the additional thoughts was done within the parameters of the predetermined themes

The sequencing of the interview guide was based on the themes of the research question. There are three macro-themes that serve as a broad framework, namely: brand experiences, sponsorship, and customer-based brand. The framework is in line with the research context as outlined in the literature review. The sequencing of the themes also follows the explanation and causal data interpretation strategy that is discussed in section 4.11 of this chapter, the data analysis section.

#### *4.8.1.1. Part One*

Part one of the guide explores the brand equity theme. These questions are called experience questions, they serve to probe what a participant knows about a concept (Tracy, 2013). The theme was made of eight questions that were structured to attain data that shows how executives in sponsor organizations understand the concept of customer-based brand equity. The data derived would be used to provide a practical understanding of the concept and the application of the model in practice.

#### *4.8.1.2. Part Two*

The second theme of the guide addressed sponsorship. The theme was to understand the motivations behind the respective organizations' sponsorship strategies, more especially the sponsorship of short-term tournaments. In addition, the section probed the decision of title sponsor status. There are five questions that make up this section.

#### *4.8.1.3. Part Three*

The third theme addressed experiential marketing as a practice for sponsor organizations. The theme intended to investigate the kind of strategies the brands use to utilize the sponsored assets. The questions under the themes also investigated the kind of activities that brands regard as substantial to deliver experience to consumers. Furthermore, the questions probed how brands tactically plan to execute to deliver impact for the brand through these experiences.

#### 4.8.1.4. *Part Four*

To show if experiences deployed do deliver any impact, the last section of the research instrument addressed the impact of sponsorship on the CBBE model. The objective of the last section was to investigate which tenets of the model brands aim for and how they validate that impact. Under this theme, the anticipated responses were investigated using the tenets of the CBBE model. To ensure that the guide was a suited instrument, and could collect accurate data, a pilot study was conducted to fine-tune the final instrument to be used with research participants.

#### 4.8.2. Pre-testing/ Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale replica of the main study used to evaluate whether the instrument of enquiry was easily understood, had no ambiguity, and collected accurate data for the study (Malhotra, 2010). Furthermore, a pilot test is also used to identify gaps for improvement prior to the large-scale study (Schultze & Avital, 2013). The outcomes from the study pilot are used to fine-tune the final measurement instrument. The participants for the pilot study were two respondents working on the sponsorship portfolio at Vodacom, another firm that is involved in soccer sponsorship. The two participants account for half of the main study sample, which is substantial in accordance with the sample size (Tracy, 2013).

There were no significant deviations found during the pre-test pilot. A logistical finding was that the guide length was longer than the predetermined time driven by the prolonged responses indicating a need to ask redirect questions to consolidate participant responses. Another consideration found was that the number of questions could be reduced driven by the understanding that the intended audience are experts in the subject matter therefore, they were able to answer most predetermined probing questions which could have been essential for respondents who are not educationally inclined on the subject matter. The chosen measurement instrument was trailed and tested for goodness of fit with the study. Once collected, the data was analysed using the analysis strategy outlined in the following section.

#### 4.9. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis refers to the systematic application of statistical techniques to evaluate data, and illustrate emergent themes (Malhotra, 2010). Data analysis commences

after data is properly transformed into compatible formats from different sources (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2015). The objective of data analysis is to draw consolidated inferences about the population under study (Malhotra, 2010). An iterative analysis approach rather than a grounded theory approach was used in this study. Iterative analysis is a context-based approach to data interpretation based on the premise that data reading alternates between emergent patterns of the data but also fuses existing explanations and models (Charmaz, 2011). The use of iterative analysis was in line with the interpretivist paradigm, which states that the context of the study subject matters in the interpretation (Thahn & Thahn, 2015).

The data analysis for this study was done through use of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), specifically the NVivo 11 package (Lakeman, 2009). According to Lakeman, of all the qualitative data software packages, NVivo 11 has a long pedigree and certainly the most advanced (2009). The NVivo 11 package assists with the management and the actual analysis of data (Tracy, 2013). The data analysis also made use of the manual approach of analysis through a standard word-processing program i.e. Microsoft Word to draft primary codes that derived from the additional fieldwork collateral. To interpret the data, the explanation and causality strategy was selected, below is a discussion about the strategy.

#### 4.9.1. Explanation and Causality Strategy

Tracy (2013) states that interpreting qualitative can be an abstruse exercise of constant reflections on the data, the literature, field notes and real-life phenomena. It is therefore important to employ a systematic analysis strategy that provides a framework and builds credibility and pedagogy (Tracy, 2013). The explanation and causality analysis strategy was best suited for the research question because it did not focus solely at emergent themes in the data but also seeks to develop explanations about the causality of the events in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Tracy, 2013). The strategy also analyses cases contextually because of the underpinned knowledge that in reality, different motivations, contexts and experiences are key drivers in decision making. This notion is true to the study as the data was contextual to each sponsor brand as they all have different motivations behind their sponsorships. There are two important tenets for consideration on the strategy are:

#### *4.9.1.1. Comparative Data*

Comparative data is used to understand a phenomenon in different contexts for comparison purposes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This is a useful approach to understanding the different motivations to explain brand decisions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Tracy (2013) also states that comparative data probes how a phenomenon has played out for different participants, with and without the presence of different issues and outcomes. This helped understand how the different sponsorship strategies had been impacted by the respective brand contexts.

#### *4.9.1.2. Antecedents and Consequents*

The strategy sought to understand causal connections and for the researcher to make links between what happened and what the results are (Tracy, 2013). The process in this analysis began with probing the contexts of the respective participants (Tracy, 2013). In line with this strategy, the interview guide illustrated customer-based brand equity in these sponsor organisations and thereafter probed to understand the context that led to decisions to pursue sponsorship strategies. To effectively utilize the analysis strategy, reliable and valid data was collected using a diagnosed and approved instrument of enquiry. Section 4.10 below discusses the trustworthiness of the instrument of enquiry to ensure data gathered is reliable and valid.

### **4.10. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

Trustworthiness refers to how a researcher establishes that the research findings are credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable (Tracy, 2013). To assess the trustworthiness of the research instrument, the four tenets of trustworthiness were used (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The criteria are a set of practices to which a researcher must conform to, to ensure their work output is of quality.

#### **4.10.1. Credibility**

Credibility refers to the confidants that the researcher has in the study's findings (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2015), it probes how truthful and accurate the findings are (Creswell, 2013). To ensure that research findings are credible, a triangulation strategy was employed in this study (Tracy, 2013). There are five types of triangulation, namely; data, investigator, theory, methodological, and environmental triangulation (Charmaz, 2011). For this study, data triangulation was utilized. Data triangulation

refers to the use of different information sources to increase the truthfulness and accuracy of findings (Charmaz, 2011). In addition to the in-depth probing of different sponsorship studies from different countries, the researcher utilized a network of sponsorship managers to gain insight into their perspectives on the study outcomes. The researcher also reached out to academics in the field for their insights and inputs. The feedback from these diverse groups was collated and compared to ascertain if there were any areas of convergence and or of deviation. The outcomes from the different sources were all consistent with no contrasting views on the research outcomes. the following sub-section probes the ease of transferability of demonstrating the ease of application of the study findings in other contexts.

#### 4.10.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to how the research findings can be applicable to other similar outputs, phenomenon or similar populations (Schultze & Avital, 2013). Creswell (2013) argues that thick description to demonstrate that the results could be applicable in other instances. This was true for this study as thick description was applied. This criterion refers to the explicit explanation of the context under study and the meanings attached to specific parameters (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This criterion is especially useful in uncovering tacit knowledge that may not simply be explained by looking at the surface information but requires in-depth probing. The researcher immersed themselves on the topic of study to ensure they had enough knowledge to be able to dig deeper and engage beyond the surface responses. The researcher can transfer the new knowledge gathered into other contexts of sponsorship marketing and brand management. In addition to transfer of findings into different contexts, the study also adheres to dependability, which is the extend that the study can be replicated by other researchers and still yield consistent results.

#### 4.10.3. Dependability

Dependability refers to the ease of replication of the study with the premise that the outcomes remain consistent (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This means that there should be enough information from the research to ensure that another research would follow the study plan and be able to obtain similar findings to the study (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The plan for this research was audited by the research supervisor to ensure



the research process was could easily be replicated and the same outputs could be obtained.

#### 4.10.4. Confirmability

Lastly, the study adheres to confirmability to ensure that the findings are neutral (Guba & Lincoln, 2015). This criterion means that findings are based on responses from participants and not any biased input from the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Creswell, 2014). The researcher referred to the study participants who are experts in the field for their reflections and more input on the data gathered. This criterion allows for a dialogue that could pave opportunities for clarifying questions, critique, feedback, affirmation and further collaboration (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Tracy, 2010, 2013). The participants voluntarily availed themselves for additional input if the researcher required, to which the researcher utilized. The researcher employed the Prolonged Engagement in Field strategy to fully immerse in the world of the participants for insight and rich context. Although care was taken to mitigate any arising limitations in the study, there were noted limitations identified in the study and are discussed in the following section.

#### 4.11. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Study limitations refer to characteristics of the study design that are likely to impact the outcome and the interpretation of the research results (Malhotra, 2010). The biggest limitation for the study is the sample size. The sample size for this study is four executives from four soccer sponsor brands in South Africa. Small sample sizes limit the generalisability of research findings; however, this limitation is organic. The sponsorship sample itself is limited to a few brands in South Africa, the short-term tournament sponsors. Therefore, the total size in the sample frame is equal to the selected sample. Another limitation as identified by Tracy (2013) prevalent in this study is the fact that qualitative data is subjective and mostly based on the participant's context thus there is no way for the researcher to verify the outputs objectively to generalize the research outputs.

Lastly, although this research has shown the gap between experiences and resonance, further research needs to validate whether brands want to use their sponsorship properties to build resonance or not, as the existing strategies have stayed clear of

this CBBE attribute. The suggested considerations for future research provide a template on how other researchers can build on this study. Even with these limitations, the researcher stayed true to the research instrument worthiness as seen in earlier section. The next section delves into how the researcher eliminated any biases that arose in the study to maintain the integrity and truthfulness of the findings.

#### 4.12. ELIMINATION OF BIAS

Research bias refers to the manipulation or distortion of data in research (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). The researchers argue that it is possible for bias to occur at every stage of research, whether in the literature analysis, research design phase, data collection, and in data analysis. According to Tracy (2013), there are several drivers of bias in research, these could be design-related, actors bias, credibility, and subjectivity-linked biases.

The research stayed clear of any biases by ensuring strict adherence to the research design that was formulated and agreed upon between the researcher and supervisor. The plan as outlined in the design assisted the researcher in removing any form of bias or prejudice at each phase of research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). During fieldwork, the researcher adhered to the instrument of inquiry to mitigate any shortcuts or excessive concentration on issues; instead the discussion guide ensured coverage and attention to all details as set per the thematic framework in the design (Roulston & Shelton, 2015).

With respect to confirmation bias, a traditionally known form of bias, where the researcher formulates a hypothesis or a conviction on a topic and uses the respondents to confirm that belief or opinion (Roulston & Shelton, 2015), the researcher adhered to constant consultation and engagement with the supervisor to ensure the researcher does not have fixed notions on the research outputs that may deter the research direction. On the part of the participants, no incentives were promised or used as leverage to participate in the study. their informed consent stipulated that participation is voluntary therefore removing any unprecedented expectations. Participants were told they would only receive the research outputs once published for their perusal. The research design and consultation helped addressed

mitigate bias as these included methods like triangulation to ensure the researcher kept clear of any biases.

#### 4.13. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Tracy (2013) states that practicing ethics in qualitative research requires the consideration of rules and procedures, together with consideration of the different contexts in which the research is conducted. This is true for this study, the researcher ensured strict adherence and compliance with the ethical rules and procedural ethics as stipulated by the University of Cape Town research guidelines. The measurement instrument was verified and approved by the University of Cape Town Commerce Faculty Ethics Research Committee.

The study worked within parameters which are in line with the ethical considerations, these were: ensuring that informed consent was granted, ensuring that no harm came to participants, confidentiality and anonymity, and ensuring permission was obtained.

##### 4.13.1. Informed consent

Informed consent refers to a declaration by the research participants that verifies they understand their rights and that their participation is voluntary (Tracy, 2013). A research invitation letter, outlining the study, the objectives and participation requirements was sent to the participants prior to commencement of the interviews for their perusal and sign-off. The consent form is found in Appendix C. The invitation letters and consent forms were reviewed and signed off by the supervisor prior to sending to the invitees. Also included in the terms was the request to record the proceedings of the interview. This clause was added on the early stages of the relationship to build trust and credibility such that the respondents do not feel ambushed on the day of the interview. Importantly, the participants are very high profile and elite professionals, therefore their privacy and perceived misrepresentation play a critical factor in their consent (Tracy, 2013). To solidify credibility, the contact details of the supervisor, and the head of the Commerce Faculty Ethics Research Committee were shared with the participants.

#### 4.13.2. Ensuring no harm comes to participants

This subsection addresses the measures taken by the researcher to ensure that no harm comes the way of respondents because of participating in the research study (Schultze & Avital, 2013). For this research, engagement with participants was through means of verbal communication only and did not involve any form of active participation by the respondent (Schultze & Avital, 2013). Furthermore, the researcher adhered to the code of ethics guidelines as enforced by UCT to ensure respondents are not harmed in anyhow. To negate any form of harm, the researcher politely wrote to the participants for their permission to partake in the study, outlining the expectations and consequences for participating in the research.

Secondly, the researcher interviewed participants at their respective work offices to ensure familiarity and that no harm comes to any of them because of location outside their comfort. Lastly as seen in the pilot section, prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher pretested the interview guide to tease out any sensitive questions which could have potential emotional harm. The researcher undertook all precautions to ensure that no risk or unexpected challenges befell the study process. Over and above the weeding out of any harmful consequences, the study also adhered to confidentiality of participants as discussed in the next sub-section.

#### 4.13.3. Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity refer to the ambiguity on the identifiers of the information collected such that only the researcher can identify the responses of an individual respondent (Tracy, 2013). Confidentiality and anonymity ensure that no information can be tied or attributed to an individual (Schultze & Avital, 2013). All data collected about the respondents' personal information and the information gathered towards the study was kept confidential and only accessed by the researcher and the supervisor. All the information makers were coded to remove any sensitive information whilst recordings were transcribed, and the materials stored securely.

#### 4.13.4. Ensuring that permission is obtained

Obtaining permission refers to the researcher getting informed consent from participants who have the legal capacity to consent, exercise free power of choice, without any unwarranted intervention or coercion (Malhotra, 2010). Consent ensures

that participants have enough knowledge about the research to make an informed decision about participation (Tracy, 2013). The researcher sent an invitation letter with a consent form to respondents, the invitation letter outlined the study, its objectives, and the expected contribution from respondents. The consent form covered points such as the identity of the researcher, and details of the supervisor together with those of the head of the ethics committee. These details would enable the respondents to contact the respective parties in they have problems with the research process or the researcher. Furthermore, the form highlighted the rights of the participants in the research process and assured participants on their anonymity. Importantly, the form indicated that the respondents would have access to the final report, however clarified that there would be no monetary benefits or otherwise to manage expectations. The ethical considerations ensured that the researcher lives within the confines of the code of ethics, staying true to the processes of the research to achieve truthful results. The following section concludes the chapter and introduces the data analysis chapter.

#### 4.14. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter presented an overview of the research design and the methodology. The study was conducted on the premise of a qualitative inquiry using an interpretivist paradigm. The paradigm states that it is important to conduct research contextually to illuminate the nimble factors that underpin different contexts. This is true to the study, as it serves to understand the different sponsor contexts and sponsorship decisions. Interviews were conducted using a structured interview guide on a 4-person sample of senior executives representing four title sponsor brands of short-term tournaments at PSL level. The interview guide was pilot-tested to ensure compatibility and usefulness. The analysis section presented an analytic strategy used to analyse the data, the explanation and causality strategy using NVivo 11 software. Lastly, the chapter also showed the limitations encountered due to the design of the study and the mitigation measures. The following chapter presents in detail the data analysed with reference to the thematic framework.

## CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings and the interpretation of the data collected. The findings are analysed with reference to the theoretical framework and themes deduced from interviews. The chapter starts off with characteristics of the sample under study, and thereafter provides a detailed thematic analysis of the findings. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results and highlights important findings from the research.

### 5.2. RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

This section outlines the sample used in this research. As indicated the sample comprised of four executives from the four short-term tournament sponsor brands in South Africa at PSL level. The sample was purposefully selected, and the primary criterion was brand executives who oversee sponsorship portfolios. Table 5.1 below provides an overview of the sponsors and the respondents' rank.

**Table 5.1: Respondents Profiles**

Respondent	Tournament Sponsor	Title Sponsor	Type of Tournament
1	✓	✓	Single Elimination
2	✓	✓	Round Robin
3	✓	✓	Single Elimination
4	✓	✓	Single & Double Elimination

The sample is organic as it is a true reflection of the brands that sponsor short-term tournaments at the PSL level (PSL, 2017). The illustration in Table 5.2 depicts the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) and Head of Division (HOD) as titles for the sample elements chosen to partake in this study.

**Table 5.2: Seniority of Respondents**

Seniority					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	CMO	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
	HOD	3	50.0	75.0	100.0
	Senior Manager	0	.000	.000	.000
	Total	4	100.0	100.0	

### 5.3. THEMATIC DATA ANALYSIS

This section analyses data through thematic data analysis lens. As discussed in the previous chapter, the NVivo 11 software was used to aid with the analysis of the data gathered. The codes presented were deduced after a second-level coding analysis to ensure the data was indeed at a saturation level. The results show that all of the sample participants were senior level executives, per the sample design, from the firms represented. Three respondents occupied the Head of Sponsorship Division post, whilst one respondent was a Chief Marketing Officer. In terms of the thematic results, the respondents' insights did not deviate from each other.

#### 5.3.1. Ensuring that Permission is Obtained

The analysis of the data revealed the following nodes, into which the data is coded. The themes emerged in relation to the literature, the adapted framework and the research question. The nodes identified form the thematic frame for analysis. Below is a presentation of the themes and how they aid in answering the research question.

1. Firms' understanding of brand equity
2. The definition of CBBE according to the sponsor firm
3. The role of brand essence in driving CBBE
4. The motivation of sponsorship
5. Pursuing short-term tournaments
6. The importance of brand experiences
7. Types of brand experiences

## 8. Brand experiences in building relationships

### 5.3.1.1. *Understanding of Brand Equity*

The aim of this theme was to appreciate how knowledgeable the custodians are with respect to brand equity. Although very varied, the respondents were knowledgeable on the concept of brand equity at a macro-level. The respondents all defined brand equity within the school of thought that it is the relationship that exists between the customer and the brand (Aaker, 1993; Keller, 2001, 2009). Additionally, the respondents variedly stated that brand equity is about the brand's essence converting into brand love (Keller, 2009). The definitions provided by respondents are in line with the scholarly definitions as in the literature. The brand custodians understand brand equity as what a brand does to influence what sticks in the mind of the consumer through advertising, sponsorship and products (Keller, 2009). The responses were as follows:

*"I think brand equity is about the brand essence coming alive through our advertising, sponsorship, customer experiences and even our products themselves. As a brand, we have identified five value drivers that differentiate us. So, for me brand equity is, in whatever we do, the value drivers we have identified as a brand must come alive and that will bring us close to the consumer" [Participant A].*

Another respondent had this to say about brand equity:

*"I think brand equity is about brand love and loyalty that a consumer has towards a brand. Although price dictates everything or what people buy, the brand loyalty and brand love need to be present and is done through the 360 marketing" [Participant B].*

In addition, the other two respondents see brand equity as a relational framework that results from what the brand does in relation to the needs of the consumer. From the responses, it is evident that the brand custodians are very knowledgeable on the brand equity as their responses are closely linked to literature definitions.

### 5.3.1.2. *Definition of CBBE according to the sponsor firm*

With understanding customer-based brand equity, the respondents did not make varied definitions from brand equity. They see CBBE as the responses that a



consumer has towards a brand. CBBE is seen as a behaviour that the customer portrays towards the brand (Kakati & Choudhury, 2013). The custodians denote CBBE when a consumer takes action either through hard purchasing or recommendation of the brand to others. Below is an iteration of how the custodians understand CBBE.

Respondents are knowledgeable and hold strong opinions about CBBE. The explicit iterations show that 100% of the respondents define CBBE as a response wherein there is action taken by the consumer. A further 50% of the sample attributed CBBE to brand love. None of the custodians made reference to brand meaning as an attribute of CBBE. Participants stated that:

*“customer-based brand equity is about a response from the consumer and how they relate to your brand. Customer-based brand equity is an action, and that action should be commercial either by a purchase or by recommending the brand to others” [Participant A].*

*“customer-based brand equity is how the consumer responds to a brand’s marketing, sponsorship and products. It is a difficult one to measure. In the past sponsorship was earmarked to do that job of building customer-based equity but because there is no more exclusivity in sponsorship, it has become difficult to measure it” [Participant C].*

Interestingly, the respondents noted that it is through brand essence or brand purpose that brands can achieve CBBE. The above extracts represent the overall viewpoints of the four participants; therefore, it was not necessary to repeat the same statements.

#### **5.3.1.3 Brand Purpose in CBBE**

All respondents find brand essence to be a major determinant of brand equity and CBBE. Although they term essence differently, they all agree that CBBE is highly impacted by the brand’s purpose. They state that a brand purpose is what drives a marketing strategy (Agarwal, 2009).

*“As I indicated that brand equity is brand essence coming to life. Once brands decide what makes them different, then they can build equity based on that. They can start owning that space. For us, we own money experts ‘who do good’*

*and our objective through all marketing and communication is to convey that we are money experts. When consumers think money experts, they should think of us and I think that is our equity there” [Participant B]*

*“You see, marketing is a commercial discipline. You use the brand purpose to trigger actions from consumers to contribute towards the bottom-line” [Participant C].*

*“a brand needs to have a purpose, something which is a strategic consideration. From this you can build affinity with the consumer based on what you stand for as a brand” [Participant D].*

The participants deem a brand's essence or purpose as a key consideration in building brand equity. Like Aaker and Biel (2009), the respondents emphasize that a brand purpose is the soul and heart from which equity is built from. There is a deep entrenched understanding that to own any equity, a brand needs to be clear on its strategic positioning.

#### *5.3.1.4 The Motivation for Sponsorship*

Under the sponsorship theme, respondents provided varying reasons with regards to why their firms pursue sponsorship. For most firms, the current sponsorship strategies are a legacy of motivations decided years ago. Respondents admittedly say that there is no current motivation for sponsorship either than the fact that their brands have always been sponsors. The respondents all categorically state that there is pressure internally to redefine their strategies and to realign sponsorship under marketing than having sponsorship as a separate strategy (Clark *et al.*, 2009).

*“To be honest with you, when we started, the major league sponsor had announced that they would be giving up the league. We then drafted a strategy to counter a major competitor whom we heard was also contending, we lost the bid. I think we wanted to also be visible because of the fear that our major competitor would be so visible” [Participant A]*

*“We went into sponsorship because we wanted to change the image of the brand. This was over 8 years ago and since then, we have not really revised that strategy. Recently I actually asked my team why we sponsor the properties we currently do, someone said it is for awareness, I asked if they thought we would lose all our awareness if we suddenly stopped?” [Participant B]*

*“When brand X gave up their sponsorship of the tournament, I think it was seen as an opportunity for us to also be seen especially in the build-up to world cup and our biggest competitor was already a household name. I think that’s the core reason but also, we wanted to be in the midst of one of the most celebrated passion points whilst increasing our standing with the supporters” [Participant C]*

*“At the time, our brand was declining in terms of awareness and usage, so we had to come up with a strategy to revive usage. We could have sponsored any other competition, but I think we opted to create a platform where we can integrate properties who all enjoy equities of their own into one. The first five years was to rebuild awareness and the next five years to branch into building a different image to open up the brand” [Participant D]*

*“I think over the past few years, we have had a separate sponsorship and a marketing strategy. You see that the marketing was focused on one thing and the sponsorship on another. The guys from sales have also turned to us for help with their targets on the last minute” [Participants B and D]*

Even though the respective sponsors started off with clear objectives, they are currently being sustained by legacy. All the brand custodians indicated that they are currently working on revising their strategies, either to work towards a commercial goal or to have sponsorship support marketing as a tool and not as a standalone strategy (Clark *et al.*, 2009).

#### *5.3.1.5 Short-term Tournaments*

The responses to this theme were to uncover why sponsor brands opt for short-term tournament sponsorship over other kinds of sponsorships (Kudo, 2010). For 75% of

the sponsor brands, the reason they ended up sponsoring tournaments was because they were the only properties available to sponsor especially in soccer. As sponsorship got a lot of traction, every brand jumped into the wagon and it became a first-come first-served transaction (Becker-Olsen, 2003). The custodians also reveal that it is easier to leverage short-term tournaments in terms of costs (Roy and Cornwell, 1999). They also state that it is also easier to utilize short-term sponsorship for immediate objectives.

*“I think tournaments are better in a sense that you do not spend over R140 million in a season and cannot effectively use it because sponsorship is about the numbers, both at the stadium and those on TV. We know South African soccer has three big teams that are able to bring in the numbers so for the rest of the games you are missing out on the investment” [Participant A]*

*“I think for us the short format is useful because we can use it to appeal to the wider market with certain objectives. We know that the tournament works hard to uplift our awareness for instance after the December holidays” [Participant B]*

*“There is a lot of excitement with a tournament that is sustained until the end whereas with the league, mid-season it loses the excitement. You find there are games on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday where there are no people at the stadium and the viewership is so low” [Participant C]*

*“You know social media is used to complain right, for us we have found that for the duration of the tournament, the positive sentiments on social media fly off” [Participant D]*

One respondent also noted that because there is a lot of excitement around the tournament itself, spectators are not overly concerned about which team is playing, they are more excited about the event itself (Schmitt, 2010). The contrary is true of the domestic league where once fatigue sets in, the only way a game will get traction is based on who is playing (Schmitt, 2010). From the responses, it is clear that the tournament format is seen as being able to deliver impact instantly, versus the

domestic league (Klusemann *et al.*, 2013). All the custodians agree that sponsoring a season-long property is far more expensive, both in terms of the agreement itself and the utility of the property. With the domestic league, fatigue usually sets in and spectators lose interest whereas with a tournament, they remain glued (Lanclos, 2017).

#### 5.3.1.6 Reasons for Title Sponsorships

The objective of section three of the interview guide was to gain insight why brands opt for title sponsorship of the short-term tournament. Similar with the other themes, there is consensus amongst the brand custodians on the motivations for title sponsorship. The custodians state that it about retaining top of mind awareness over the period when the tournament takes place. One respondent stated that they had found that once the tournament finishes, their awareness declines back behind that of the category leader. The other most prevalent reason is to get closer to the soccer audience through their passion point by virtue of association.

*“Our brand image was that of an old white man who is not exciting, I think attaching our name to a soccer tournament worked had in changing the meaning of the brand” [Participant C].*

For some firms, this association is not only effective in terms of relatability but also for product selling during the tournament through sales tactics (Byl, 2014). Two of the sponsors declared that they in fact see exponential increments during the tournament, *“The sales team looks to us to help them with targets”*. However, the other firms do not see a drastic change on the business bottom-line even during the tournament (Byl, 2014). One brand custodian stressed that this is because of the consumer category they are in, where they do not expect a consumer to suddenly change their whole financial behaviour. Instead, the firm bets on consideration and recommendation of the brand to others.

Importantly, one respondent noted that title sponsorship should be based on the purpose that drives sponsorship. Herein, the respondent noted that if the purpose is to uplift awareness, then a brand should associate with a property that enjoys high levels of awareness so that it can draw from that equity (Woisetschlager *et al.*, 2014).

*“In South Africa, soccer enjoys high levels of awareness amongst the middle market, so if you want to enjoy high levels of awareness then partner with soccer to increase the awareness for yourself. You must make sure you are seen at the stadium” [Participant B].*

Title sponsorship therefore is seen as means to best enjoy the equity of the property sponsored. It is driven by the purpose that the sponsorship is set out to achieve.

#### *5.3.1.7 The Importance of Brand Experiences*

The responses to this theme reveal how important brand experiences are in building relationships with consumers. All the respondents shared the view that brand experiences are crucial to building strong brands (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Schmitt, 2010).

One respondent indicated that because the purpose has not been very clear, it is difficult to deploy impactful experiences that can alter the relationship a consumer has with a brand (Schmitt, 2010). The respondents further added that the activities that have been done are also short-lived in line with the excitement and no audit has really been done to assess their effectiveness.

*“I think we are used to doing brand activations and sales activations during the tournament. Those are things we really focus on. I think as I have mentioned that sponsorship is seen as a strategy to sell and improve things like awareness” [Participant A].*

From the responses provided, it is evident that brand experiences have only been utilized to impact awareness and sales (Shilbury *et al.*, 2009). Respondents affirm that the experiences are not brand-centred but about sales, showing that there is a disconnect between sponsorship and marketing at a strategic level (Haeckel and Carbone, 2002).

*“In our last campaign we ran a promotion that said we would multiply every recharge value by the number of goals scored in a match. As soon as the match finishes, the consumer likely forgets about the interaction but continues with the product” [Participant A].*

*“I think the issue is we attach products in the conversation which makes the experiences a selling activity. Now that I think of it, even the brand activators are trained on product not on brand knowledge” [Participant B].*

*“Honestly I think we are making progress with using different activities to amplify engagement with our consumers. We have managed to create an experience before the tournament by involving consumers during the draw process” [Participant C]*

*“We recently sent our Head of Sponsorship to watch the super bowl to get a view of how the brands utilize just that halftime insert to impact consumers” [Participant D].*

Firms realise the importance and the value that can be derived from brand experiences in sponsorship. However, they all state that they have looked at brand experiences beyond activations for product selling and core sponsorship messaging.

#### *5.3.1.8 Brand experiences in building relationships*

The section above shows that experiences have been centred on awareness and product selling. This node was to probe the kind of experiences that brands use to engage consumers (Khan and Rahman, 2015). From the responses, there are three activities that all the brands have been using during the tournaments, namely brand activations, social media interactions and digital campaigns. The activations are used as tactical attributes for engagement. The responses were:

*“Before the tournament starts, we engage with consumers via social media to make the draw an event on its own. We get consumers to predict which teams will be match with who” [Participant A].*

*“During the matches, we run onscreen competitions where consumers can use their phones to win prizes” [Participant B].*

*“For this past season, we had over 1000 brand activators at hotspots we have identified around the country. At each location we ran competitions where the spectators stood a chance to win instant prizes” [Participant C]*

*“We have been using perimeter boards at the stadium to engage consumers. I think the messaging has mainly been around the how to enter or play the competition” [Participant D].*

Firms are introducing other activities to engage with consumers like roadshows and mobile engagements to make the consumer feel close to the competition (Khan & Rahman, 2015). The roadshows are carried out by brand activators. Respondents note that current roadshows actively promote the sponsored property and products (Haeckel & Carbone 2002). The respondents state that this leads to the erosion of the imagery and meaning of the brand and amplifies mostly that of the property sponsored (Schmitt, 2010). The responses gathered show that experiences have not been used to impact beyond the first two tenets of the CBBE mode (Nelson & Meyvis, 2008). Part four of the interview guide set out to understand how experiences could be used in building relationships.

The respondents have shown that they understand the importance of having impactful experience and what value impactful experiences bring for their brands (Khan and Rahman, 2015). However, by their own admission, not many brand experience activities have been utilised to impact beyond awareness and sales conversion. The experiences given to consumers over the years have not led to any lasting impact. None of the brand owns the relationship attribute or have identified an activity strong enough to build consumer relationships.

The acknowledgement by the respondents that brand experiences have the potential to impact consumer relationships is of importance for the study because it validates the proposed conceptual model. Furthermore, the data gathered especially with regards to experiences in relationship building shows that there is room to develop experience activities that speak to CBBE. However, these should be driven by the brand strategy which should drive the sponsorship strategy. To conclude, a brand



purpose is instrumental in driving long lasting relationships with consumers. To date however, firms have led with a sales strategy rather than a brand strategy.

#### 5.4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings analysed and presented in this chapter show that the target population have a clear understanding of brand equity and how it translates into CBBE. The target population acknowledge the importance of brand experiences during short-term tournaments and how they contribute impact on the brand. This admission validates the proposed model by the researcher therefore establishing a logical structure for reporting the results. Furthermore, the findings suggest that although the respondents understand the importance of building strong relationships with consumers, no brands have fully utilised experiences to build lasting relationships but instead have used experiences to garner awareness and improve sales. The findings of the study are discussed in detail in the next chapter and recommendations and future considerations are tabled.

## **CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents summaries of findings, conclusions and recommendations from the research. The chapter first presents the theoretical findings from existing literature which was the guide for this research. The section is followed by an interpretation of the results based on the study objectives and the adapted conceptual framework. The chapter also discusses the research limitations, both from methodological and theoretical perspectives. Lastly, the chapter suggests considerations for future research to better illuminate the concept under study.

### **6.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The main objective of this study was to determine if brand experiences have any significant impact on customer-based brand equity for firms that sponsor short-term tournaments. The two sub-sections below present the findings to the study from literature and primary research perspectives to aid answer this objective.

#### **6.2.1. Findings from Literature Review**

This section presents the findings from the literature reviewed looking at sponsorship, brand experiences, and CBBE. Sponsorship as a framework is a widely and well researched subject and CBBE similarly (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014). Likewise, brand experiences have gotten attention in research (Schmitt, 2010). However, the intersection of these concepts has not received great attention thus setting context for this study.

The literature states that sponsorship marketing grew increasingly popular in the late 1980s when there was a significant shift in marketing (Schmitt, 2011). The shift was an effort by firms to differentiate themselves in the marketplace by moving away from the common ratification of products' aspects and functional benefits towards brands' symbolic overtones (Donlan & Crowther, 2014).

To date, as sport sponsorship continues to grow, there is increased pressure on sponsor firms to produce tangible results for businesses (Donlan, 2013). As a result,

sponsors have turned to title sponsorship of short-term tournaments to be differentiated in a cluttered sponsorship market and to also deliver impact for businesses by providing experiences for consumers (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014). Associating with sports properties allowed firms to illuminate their purpose and position, and get closer to consumers (Pulizzi, 2013; Yousaf *et al.*, 2018).

Tournaments are different from a regular season because they are played over a predefined short period, parallel to the regular season or during the pre-season (Lanclos, 2017). In short-term tournaments, sponsors can reinvent their strategies and financial commitments over a short period (Salo, 2011). Lanclos (2017) states that short-term tournaments are more viable financially than season-long sponsorship as sponsors can reinvent and reassess their commitment as tournaments have shorter duration.

Short-term tournaments are seen as an instrument for firms to elicit excitement for fans but also to deliver impact on sponsor firms (Schmitt, 2011). Brakus *et al.* (2009) argue that to build this excitement, sponsor firms need to deploy exciting experiences to boost the effectiveness of the tournaments. The experiences are essential in delivering impact on firms as they likely alter how consumers perceive a brand (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Keller, 2013).

The literature reveals that experiences are about creating and staging interactive, memorable activities for consumers (Schmitt, 2010). Experiences are characterised by involvement and contact between the brand and consumers during the sponsored tournament (Schmitt, 2011). Brand experiences have potential to alter how consumers perceive a brand in terms of identity, meaning, responses and relationships (Donlan & Crowther, 2013). These four tenets combined equate to customer-based brand equity (Keller, 2013). Chieng and Goi (2011) define (CBBE) as the differential brand knowledge that resides in the mind of consumers pertaining to a brand. Brand experiences were thus classified as the intervening variable in the study.

Building and maintaining a strong CBBE ensures that a brand remains top of mind, enjoys good salience, has good imagery, enjoys good consumer responses and has loyal customers (Chavanat & Bodet, 2014). Customer interactions play a significant

role in how consumers think, feel, and respond to a brand (Groza *et al.*, 2012). From the existing literature, it is evident that brand experiences are a large contributor towards creating CBBE, in terms of awareness and image (Schmitt, 2010). Keller (2013) states that CBBE is built over long periods, however, the current behaviour of sponsor brands is contrary to the scholarly pronouncements. Groza *et al.* (2012) also state that impactful interactions are continual which leads to strong impressions in consumers' minds. Both these stances contradict the current practice as experiences are deployed only within the duration of the short-term tournament. This is the potential gap that this study intended to address. Below are findings that arose from the primary research to address the theoretical gap identified.

#### 6.2.2. Findings from Primary Research

The section consolidates the key findings from the primary research in relation to the research hypotheses and the thematic framework introduced. The sample of used in this study was a group of senior experts from respective brands that sponsor short-term tournaments in South Africa. The sample were selected on their seniority and their strategic oversight of the sponsorship assets. The first theme that the study set to uncover was the understanding of brand equity by brand custodians.

Although the custodians articulated their understanding of brand equity variedly, it was evident that all the respondents were quite knowledgeable of brand equity at a very macro-level. The respondents all defined brand equity within the school of thought that it is the relationship that exists between the customer and the brand (Aaker, 1993; Keller, 2001, 2009). Additionally, the respondents variedly stated that brand equity is about the brand's essence converting into brand love (Keller, 2009). The definitions provided by respondents are in line with the scholarly definitions as in the literature. In addition, the other two respondents see brand equity as a relational framework that results from what the brand does in relation to the needs of the consumer.

When asked specifically on CBBE, the respondents could not clearly separate CBBE from brand equity. All the respondents perceive CBBE as an action that a consumer takes, either through a purchase or recommendation of the brand to others. A further 50% of the respondents attributed CBBE to brand. Respondents stated that a brand

purpose is central to the enablement of CBBE through a consolidated marketing strategy.

Respondents understood sponsorship to be a tactical strategy rather than part of a larger brand building exercise. They deem the current sponsorship strategies as legacy plans, based on motivations decided many years ago, thus they could not directly attribute it to equity building. Pursuing short-term tournaments was also linked to legacy sponsorship decisions. for 75% of the respondents, the reason they ended sponsoring tournaments was because their competition had already taken over the season-long leagues.

Secondary to this reason was the cost effectiveness of short-term tournaments. This is because they are not season-long which helps sponsor brands to constantly re-evaluate their plans and align with business tactical objectives. One respondent also noted that because there is a lot of excitement around the tournament itself, spectators are not overly concerned about which team is playing, they are more excited about the event itself. The contrary is true of the domestic league where once fatigue sets in, the only way a game will get traction is based on who is playing. Sponsor brands feed off this excitement by implementing experiences during tournaments.

All the respondents shared the view that brand experiences are crucial to building strong brands. However, one respondent indicated that because the purpose has not been truly clear, it is difficult to deploy impactful experiences that can alter the relationship a consumer has with a brand. Respondents affirm that the experiences are not brand-centred but about sales, showing that there is a disconnect between sponsorship and marketing at a strategic level. The respondents further added that the activities that have been done are also short-lived in line with the excitement and no audit has really been done to assess their effectiveness. Firms realise the importance and the value that can be derived from brand experiences in sponsorship. However, they all state that they have looked at brand experiences beyond activations for product selling and core sponsorship messaging.

The respondents have shown that they understand the importance of having impactful experience and what value impactful experiences bring for their brands. However, by

their own admission, not many brand experience activities have been utilised to impact beyond awareness and sales conversion. The experiences given to consumers over the years have not led to any lasting impact. None of the brand owns the relationship attribute or have identified an activity strong enough to build consumer relationships. The acknowledgement by the respondents that brand experiences have the potential to impact consumer relationships is of importance for the study because it validates the proposed conceptual model. Furthermore, the data gathered especially with regards to experiences in relationship building shows that there is room to develop experience activities that speak to CBBE. The following section addresses each objective and aligns with insights from the study to recommend plans of action for academics and practitioners alike.

### 6.3. CONCLUSIONS

The section intends to illuminate the findings from the study with respect to the research questions and objectives. The purpose of the primary research was to determine if brand experiences in short-term tournaments contribute to building brand relationships with consumers. The target sample were brand custodians who oversee the sponsorship strategies for sponsor brands. This was intentional to get an understanding of whether brands who sponsor short-term tournaments regard their experiences strong enough to deliver impact. The following conclusions are drawn from the study.

Secondary Objectives:

- i. To establish if title sponsorship of a short-term tournament contributes to building brand resonance
- ii. To establish how sponsor brands measure and evaluate the impact derived from sponsorship of a short-term tournament

#### 6.3.1. Objective One

The primary objective of the study was to establish if brand experiences impact customer-based brand equity for brands who sponsor short-term soccer tournaments. Firstly, the respondents are highly knowledgeable of CBBE as they are all practitioners in the field of brand building. Like the literature, the respondents admitted that brand experiences are crucial in developing CBBE.

However, the respondents were not fully inclined that brand experiences in sponsorships could impact all the tenets of CBBE, especially relationships. The respondents all highlighted that this was due to the observation that there has been a misalignment between the overarching brand strategy and the sponsorship strategy. The respondents revealed that this was because sponsorship strategies have operated in isolation. Importantly, they state that the experiences they have used have been to impact on the bottom-line which product sales is. Respondents indicated that on instances where they have used storytelling to deliver experiences, their brands experienced some degree of emotional uplift and similarly to attaching cause-related sponsorship stories. This affirms that brand experiences in short-term sponsorship can indeed uplift resonance, however, brands have not utilized the right activities nor have they paid attention to objectives such as creating relationships or changing their brand image.

#### 6.3.2. Objective Two

Objective two aimed to establish if title sponsorship of a short-term tournament contributes to building brand resonance. The respondents indicated that they opted for title-sponsorship because they want to enjoy the equity that the sponsored property already enjoys. This allows brands to borrow equity from another property to contribute to theirs. The respondents also cited cost as the biggest driver of in determining title sponsorship of short-term tournaments. Short-term tournaments are also seen a way to avoid “white-noise”, a problem in sponsorship of domestic or season long tournaments where the tournament becomes redundant and consumers lose interest. It is also evident that short-term tournaments can elicit very high levels of enjoyment and instant gratification that sponsors can utilize.

Importantly, short-term tournaments give time and opportunity to revise the engagement strategies and to come up with better approaches should a strategy fail. Evidently, soccer as a passion point remains a strong property for engagement with consumers. This is driven by its ability to pull in spectators which provides brands with wide pools of potential customers to target.

### 6.3.3. Objective Three

Objective three aimed to establish how sponsor brands measure and evaluate the impact derived from sponsorship of a short-term tournament. In establishing how sponsor brands measure and evaluate the impact derived from sponsorship of a short-term tournament, it is evident that there are no established tracking measurements to track the impact of sponsorship alone as an entity. Impact from sponsorship is extrapolated based on the targets, from sales objectives. In terms of identity, meaning, responses and relationships, these are measured at overall brand. Although sponsorship remains a legacy project, there is increasing pressure to measure return on investment and to align with the main brand purpose.

## 6.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

As the literature shows, sponsorship marketers have come under intense scrutiny, this is because sponsorship is regarded as an expensive exercise without any tangible results to show or any direct contributions on the bottom-line. As brands opt for sponsorships, businesses want to see tangible outcomes. This study provided insights on how to utilize sponsorship properties to deliver impacts for brands

Brands understand the importance of discharging strong brand experiences to get closer to the consumer. The study results show that brands have been using experiences to achieve objectives in terms of sales and sustained awareness. Furthermore, the results show that brands have not fully utilized brand experiences beyond the selling and awareness objectives. With respect to the primary objective, the findings show that brands understand the potential but have not been able to impact all the tenets of CBBE. This is because there is a disconnect between the brand purpose and the sponsorship strategy. This section aims to share recommendations that can contribute to the body of knowledge with respect to the study objectives.

### 6.4.1. Recommendation One

A key finding is that brands are involved in sponsorship because of legacy reasons therefore they do not have clear strategies and action plans to utilize their sponsorship properties effectively. This has resulted in sponsorship being used as a standalone tactical asset that is used to ramp up sales. The biggest gap identified is the resultant mismatch between the overall brand plan and the sponsorship strategy. A key



recommendation is for brands to align firstly, their overall marketing strategy to a brand purpose. A clear brand purpose drives the marketing strategy that will in turn inform the sponsorship plan. The interweaved stance will ensure that sponsorship is a tool in the marketing toolbox that supports all other mediums and carries a similar message and not only deployed because a sponsorship commitment exists.

Having a strong CBBE is seen as the jewel, mainly because brand equity overall is seen as the heart and soul that binds the brand and the consumer. Furthermore, a strong and positive brand equity is seen as a readily available trigger for consumer action. However, CBBE as a subset has not received much attention in the South African context. Therefore, there is a need to first dissect what CBBE means and its value to brands and how it can be fulfilled by sponsorship. From the discussion above, it is evident that brands have been utilizing sponsorship as a legacy project without alignment to the overall brand purpose.

#### 6.4.2. Recommendation Two

The second objective aimed to uncover the brand experiences that brands use to deliver impact on their brands. The study shows that brands have only used two types of activities to get close to consumers, namely; activations and digital campaigns and most recently the introduction of social media engagement. Moreover, the brands admit they have only used these methods to advance product selling and not brand building. This finding relates to the admission that brands have not used sponsorship to amplify their brand purpose or essence but instead have used sponsorship as a sales channel. There is therefore a need for brands to investigate sponsorship tactics that tell real-life stories and how the sponsor brand enables that. This creates an emotive appeal to the consumer resulting in more relatability, an element crucial in building stronger affinity. Alignment with the brand purpose will ensure that these experiences are not tactical or product focused but an interactive, emotive, storytelling experience that will make the tournament stick in the mind of the consumer.

#### 6.4.3. Recommendation Three

In terms of sponsorship of short-term tournaments, sponsors revealed that it is because short-term tournaments made more financial sense at the time of the agreements. Overtime, they have also enjoyed the flexibility of a short-term as it allows

them to reflect and revise the sponsorship strategy without wasting resources. This shows that tournaments can be a strategic placement, however, there needs to be alignment with the broader brand purpose through the master marketing plan to clearly define what objectives are to be achieved through sponsorship. Lack of clarity results in tournaments being used as a point-of-sale due to the product led strategic approach.

#### 6.4.4. Recommendation Four

Lastly, the findings have shown that brands understand the importance of building strong CBBE but have also not figured a tracking tool to measure the impact derived from sponsorship which makes businesses scrutinize sponsorship agreements even more. Sponsors need to develop a measurement tool to quantify the impact that sponsorship lands on their brands. This way, there will be clarity on what needs to be addressed and how the market is reacting to the sponsorship activities. With these insights, the following recommendations are for academics and practitioners to combat the shortcomings identified and to utilize the opportunities illuminated.

#### 6.4.5. Recommendation Five

The thesis identifies resonance as an attribute that sponsor brands should aim to achieve through their sponsorships. The literature shows that the best way to get closer to consumers is through exciting and memorable experiences. Although little scientific knowledge exists to integrate sponsorship, experiences and CBBE, this study provides a framework for practitioners to follow to deploy impactful experiences. The findings presented in the study show that the relationship between sponsorship and CBBE is very vast and there are unlimited ways of probing its strength. The thesis presents an intervening variable into the relationship which suggests that other variables can be explored in the future to further solidify the relationship. This framework needs to be validated quantitatively as it could provide reference for many more studies in the field.

### 6.5. FUTURE RESEARCH

The relationship suggested in this study is a relatively new theory in the marketing arena and thus more attention should be paid to it, both academically and practically. From evidence, short-term sponsorship is a growing field but not much research has been done to validate the field (Clark *et al.*, 2001; Cornwell *et al.*, 2009). This thesis

has shown the benefits of sponsoring a short-term tournament by drawing supporting schools of thought, but it is evident that the literature is not enough. Therefore, more future research must focus on this subject area.

Due to the lack of scientific literature about short-term tournaments, the conceptual framework adapted in this study integrated three macro concepts to establish a unison framework. Although the framework was validated and proved useful through this study, more research is needed to scientifically validate it. This pertains particularly to the short-term tournament sponsorship perspective.

Lastly, the knowledge gap that exists in brand experiences needs to be addressed with special respect to impact. There is currently a disconnect between brand purpose, sponsorship strategy, brand experiences and impact on consumers. More research should concentrate on this relationship from a lineal perspective to provide a microscopic understanding because as seen in the findings, brands are battling with putting this relationship in to practice. Lastly, the section below provides the study conclusion.

## 6.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter gave an overview on the research findings and a discussion of the research objectives. The study reveals that brand experiences have an impact on CBBE in terms of awareness and responses in terms of purchasing actions. There is no evidence to suggest impact on relationships which build brand resonance. This is due to brands' inability to use their brand purposes in their sponsorship strategies.

The chapter went on to discuss implications for practitioners and for academics in the field in terms of studying short-term tournaments for the latter and usage of brand purposes in sponsorship for the former. A future consideration is to expand on sponsorship research as it is evident from the findings and the subsequent discussions that this thesis unseals a new avenue with respect to short-term tournament sponsorships as a subject area.

In closing, this research suggests broadening of sponsorship both in theory and in practice. The core purpose of the research was to determine brand experiences in

building relationships through short-term tournaments. Because of the lack of an existing theoretical framework, a new framework was adapted to examine the relationship. The study results are crucial as they not only propose a theoretical framework for future consideration but also alert brands and practitioners to the fact that they are fully not utilizing their sponsored properties because of the disconnect between their brand purpose and sponsorship strategy. This thesis thus creates a new dimension of thinking about sponsorship, experiences, and CBBE both in academia and practice.

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## APPENDIX A: ETHICS CLEARANCE



### Faculty of Commerce

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@Commerce\_UCT



UCT Commerce Faculty Office

Date 26/10/2017

Mr Mxolisi Sibiya  
School of Management Studies  
University of Cape Town

REF: REC2017/10/013

Dear Mxolisi Sibiya

**Project The Impact of Title Sponsorship on Customer-Based Brand Equity: An Evaluation of Seasonal Soccer Tournaments in South Africa.**

Thank you for submitting your study to the Faculty of Commerce Ethics in Research Committee.

It is a pleasure to inform you that the EIRC has **formally approved** the above-mentioned study.

Approval is granted for the period of 12 months. Should you require an extension or make any substantial changes to the research methodology which could affect the experiences of participants, you must submit a revised protocol to the Committee for approval.

Please note that the ongoing ethical conduct of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

Your sincerely

Litha Tyulu  
Administrative Assistant



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## APPENDIX B: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT



**BUS5000W**

Interview Discussion Guide

### **The Impact of Title Sponsorship on Customer-Based Brand Equity: An Evaluation of Seasonal Soccer Tournaments in South Africa**

Prepared for:

**Dr. Pragasen Pillay**

**School of Management Studies**

**University of Cape Town**

Prepared by:

**Mxolisi Sibiya (SBYMXO002)**

Proposal Draft presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of M.Bus.Sc at the University of Cape Town



## Introduction

This research project has been approved by the Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Cape Town, any participant undertaking research that involves the use of human subjects or that may lead to ethical consequences for the University of Cape Town is required to agree to ethical and professional guidelines.

- Participation in this study is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled e.g. aforementioned access to the research outcomes
- The participants will have full anonymity and confidentiality. Consent will be requested should the participants or their institutions be identifiable in the final report, even in instances where pseudonyms are used
- Participants may refuse to answer questions about which they feel uncomfortable and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits

**Objectives:**  
**Introduce the study and set context. Ensure respondents understand the concept of confidentiality, no right/wrong answers and importance of individual opinions. Explain the role of the tape recorder and video recorder – for analysis purposes only.**

The research study is in fulfilment for the requirements of the Master of Business Science degree at the University of Cape Town. The topic for this study is: The Impact of Title Sponsorship on Customer-Based Brand Equity: An Evaluation of Seasonal Soccer Tournaments in South Africa.

The main purpose of this study is to determine whether or not sponsorship of seasonal soccer tournaments positively impacts Customer-Based Brand Equity. The study also seeks to evaluate if sponsor brands are able to derive any value through the sponsorship of seasonal soccer tournaments, and ascertain the kind of impact that the sponsor brands desire in terms of Identity, Meaning, Responses and Relationships. The key driver behind the study is the increased commercialization of sports and short-term sponsorship trends that have emerged over the past ten years.

The interview is in a qualitative inquiry format and a conversational engagement. The discussion guide is open-ended, allowing respondents to give in-depth, comprehensive responses. All answers and opinions from participants are welcome and there is no wrong or right answer, more-so a prescribed way to “correctly” answer the questions posed.

**Key words**

Brand Experiences – activities staged during tournaments

Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) – The impact of brand knowledge to how consumers respond to the marketing of a brand

Sponsorship – The practise of affinity marketing that provides rights and benefits to the sponsor or the buyer to utilize a property for brand exposure and connecting with consumers

Short term tournaments – soccer tournaments/competitions played over a short period of time, independent of the season long league

CBBE Model – the concepts or tenets that make up Customer-Based Brand Equity (Identity, Meaning, Responses, Relationships)

## Interview Discussion Guide

### I. What is Brand Equity to your organization?

Brand Equity = is the added value that a brand contributes to a product or service. It is the synopsis of advantages and disadvantages that a customer relates to a brand or symbol that drive the value of a product or service. Brand Equity can be evaluated through customers, which is the value of a brand according to consumers and firm based which focuses on financial benefits for firms based on equity. Both equities derive from what is seen, known and felt of the brand in the market.

Customer-Based Brand Equity = is the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer responses to the marketing of a brand. A brand is said to have a positive (negative) Customer-Based Brand Equity when consumers react more (less) favourably to an element of the marketing mix for the brand than they do to the same marketing mix element when it is attributed to a fictitiously named or unnamed version of the product or service.

Customer-Based Brand Equity comprises of four core tents:

Identity = who are you as a brand

Meaning = what are you as a brand

Responses = What about you

Relationships = What about you and me

1. What is Brand Equity to your brand?
2. How does your organization/company define Customer-Based Brand Equity?
3. What does Customer-Based Brand Equity mean to your company/organization?
4. Why is it important to derive positive Customer-Based Brand Equity?

### II. The Customer-Based Brand Equity Model





5. What tenets of the CBBE model are important to your organization?
6. Can it be achieved through sponsorship of a soccer tournament?
7. How do you integrate CBBE tenets into your sponsorship strategy
  - a. Identity – Broad Awareness (what should they think of you)
  - b. Meaning – points of parity and difference (what makes you special)
  - c. Responses – positive, accessible responses (what they should think and feel about you)
  - d. Relationship – intense and active loyalty (what about you and me)
8. Do you use experiential marketing as a theoretical framework to frame and guide your sponsorship strategy?
9. How do you build brand experiences into your short term sponsorship strategy to impact CBBE

### **III. Short-term Tournaments**

10. Why choose seasonal tournaments?
11. As a title sponsor?
12. Benefits of title sponsorship
13. What were the key drivers to this strategic imperative?

### **IV. Experiential marketing**

14. Are there different strategies to fully utilize the execution of the sponsored asset, Pre, During and Post the tournament?
15. How does your brand execute and implement to create lasting impact through short-term tournaments?
16. How do you ensure that your brand experience will deliver impact on the brand?
17. Do you consider tenets of customer-based brand equity when designing your brand experience?
18. What kinds of experience activities do you employ during a tournament to target CBBE
19. How does your brand ensure that your sponsored property is differentiated from other properties

### **V. Measuring Sponsorship experience Impact on the brand**

20. Has your organization seen any impact from the sponsorship of the property? What was the impact and was it positive or negative?

- a. Did it impact who you are as a brand
  - b. Did it influence what you are as a brand
  - c. Did it change anything about you as a brand
  - d. Did it improve the relationships you have with customers
- 21. What kind of responses does the brand anticipate or expect from the property?
  - 22. How have brand experiences assisted in delivering impact through sponsorship
  - 23. For how long should a brand sponsor a seasonal tournament before they can realize true impact?
  - 24. Does your brand have future plans to better utilize the sponsored properties to positively impact CBBE?

## **VI. Final comments and thoughts from respondents**

**Conclude, Thank and close**

## APPENDIX C: INVITATION LETTER & CONSENT FORM



### **MXOLISI SIBIYA**

Master of Business Science Candidate

**Dr PRAGASEN PILLAY**

Supervisor

24 SEOUL, 43 MULDER STREET, CENTURION, 0157

Cell: +27 (0) 82 443 8339 Supervisor: +27 (0) 21 650 5909

E-mail: [sibiyamg@gmail.com](mailto:sibiyamg@gmail.com)

Internet: [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)

Name:  
Head of Sponsorship/CMO  
Brand:  
South Africa

01 November 2017

Good day Mr/Mrs/Ms

By means of e-introduction, my name is Mxolisi Sibiyi, a Master of Business Science candidate at the University of Cape Town. I am writing this letter to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting as part of fulfilling my degree requirements, under the supervision of Dr Pragasen Pillay (Department of Management Studies). Below is an overview of the study and what your involvement would entail if you participate.

Title: *'The Impact of Title Sponsorship on Customer-Based Brand Equity: An Evaluation of Seasonal Soccer Tournaments in South Africa'*

Research Question: *"Does the title sponsorship of seasonal soccer tournaments have a positive impact on Customer-Based Brand Equity?"*

Over the past 20 years, the South African sponsorship market had looked healthy, with big brands injecting fortunes to leverage sponsorship rights and properties. In 2009, the PSL ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the world on the list of leagues with the biggest sponsorship revenues in the world. 7 years after the 2010 Soccer World Cup held in South Africa, a surge of sponsorship withdrawals trend has been noted across the different soccer divisions. A number of brands have opted to sponsor seasonal tournaments and knockout competitions. This behaviour stems from increased scrutiny of long term sponsorship's return on investment, changes in strategic imperatives and brand congruency.

The decision by brands to sponsor seasonal tournaments has the potential to alter what consumers know and see of a brand which may affect the brand's equity. This study seeks to evaluate if title sponsorship of seasonal tournaments bears any impact on Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE), in South Africa. The tenets of CBBE that will be probed are brand Identity, Meaning, Consumer Responses and Relationships. It is vital to probe the impact if any, by evaluating the strategic imperatives from the sponsor brands. For this reason, I would like to include your organization as it is one of the few tournament sponsors and you as the custodian of the strategy to share your insights.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 40min in length to take place at a location of your choosing in the month of November. The date will be set based on your availability. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at +27824438339 or at [sibiyamg@gmail.com](mailto:sibiyamg@gmail.com). You can also contact my supervisor, Dr Pillay at +27216505909 or at [p.pillay@uct.ac.za](mailto:p.pillay@uct.ac.za).

*"Our Mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."*

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Review Board and Higher Degrees Committee at the University of Cape Town. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact the chair of the Ethics in Research Committee, Professor Ulrike Rivett, ([ulrike.rivett@uct.ac.za](mailto:ulrike.rivett@uct.ac.za)).

I hope that the results of my study will be beneficial to your organization, the marketing community and the broader research community.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

signature removed to avoid exposure online

Mxolisi Sibiyi  
Student Researcher  
School of Management Studies, Marketing Section

(Signature)  
Dr. Pragasen Pillay  
Supervisor  
School of Management Studies, Marketing  
Section

## CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Mxolisi Sibiya of the School of Management Studies at the University of Cape Town. I have been afforded the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I want.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be tape recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the dissertation and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project had been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Ethics in Research Committee at the University of Cape Town. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Chair of the Ethics in Research Committee at [ulrike.rivett@uct.ac.za](mailto:ulrike.rivett@uct.ac.za).

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I agree to have my interview tape recorded.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Participant's Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: signature removed to avoid exposure online

Date: 01 November 2017

Researcher's Title: Student Researcher

Department: School of Management Studies, Marketing Section

Supervisor's Signature:

Date: 01 November 2017

Faculty Title: Supervisor

Department: School of Management Studies,  
Marketing Section

## APPENDIX D: LANGUAGE QUALITY ASSURANCE CERTIFICATE



**Language Quality Assurance Practitioner**

3 Rosslyn Close  
Isandovale  
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15 April 2019

### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I hereby certify that I have language-edited the thesis of Mr. Mxolisi Sibiya:  
**EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF BRAND EXPERIENCES ON CUSTOMER-BASED  
BRAND EQUITY**

.

I am satisfied that, provided the changes i have made are effected to the text, the language is of an acceptable standard, and is fit for examination/publication.

Should you require any further help, feel free to contact the undersigned

signature removed to avoid exposure online

Prof. J.M. Chigada, PhD

*Language Quality Assurance-Certification Statement*